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A SILVERY-WHITE substance called lithium, the lightest of all metals, has begun rather suddenly to assume a highly important role in human progress. It is playing a significant part in thermonuclear energy; it is a vital ingredient in the high energy fuels to propel inter-continental rockets.

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COMMENT

ANTI-SEMITISM IN RUSSIA

THE REVELATION that anti-semitism is pervasive, deep, and officially supported in the Soviet Union has come only slowly. Much of the evidence is given only in Jewish publications or certain authoritative sources of serious documentation such as *Est & Ouest*. Those who have heard of the matter at all may be inclined to treat it as simply an affair of the late years of Stalin and as personal to him. This is unfortunately not so.

A recent issue of *Est & Ouest* (16-31 May, 1959) publishes an anti-semitic piece from the Ukrainian newspaper *Prikarpatska Pravda* in which, because of its purely local circulation, less restraint is shown. It begins in this way:

> Lice are dirty and repugnant insects. They disport themselves in dark and dirty corners where conscientious housekeepers cannot discover them. . . . They are suckers of blood and eaters of ordure. They fear the light and when they are very numerous they attack the weak. They have the art of injuring man, of rendering his life bitter and of devouring him. It is these ugly creatures that come to mind when we inquired into the dramatic events affecting the family of Fedosia Kh. of Stanislav.

A story is then told of a certain Semen Khomiak who applies for permission to open legally a place of Jewish worship. He turns out to be a man who has deserted a gentile wife and family to marry a Jewess. Signatories to the petition he presents are forged names. He is fraudulently in receipt of a State pension as a wounded veteran.

This story is merely used as the text for an extensive sermon on the sinister character of Jewish religion and custom. Judaism is, of course, the enemy of progress, science and the workers, and the tool of Anglo-American imperialism. The rabbis are concerned solely with material gain and living a life of idle pleasure at the expense of others. In their illegal sermons they preach bloody struggle against non-Jews, who are 'destined to pitiless punishment, devastation and violence'.

It is with great disgust that we sully our pages with a description of this stuff. It reeks of the spirit of Julius Streicher, of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, of the paranoiac theory of history as a Jewish conspiracy, of the pus of *ressentiment*, malice and bigotry which has exuded from the sick society of the nineteenth and twentieth century. But it is one more proof that there is no vileness which a totalitarian state will not employ

against the freedom of the spirit. The pseudo-scientific and pseudo-humanitarian Communist State does not scruple to use this botulin of irrational hate in its psychological germ-warfare.

Official anti-semitism is covered by the excuse—which is in any case no excuse—that it is not Jewishness that is being attacked but merely 'Zionism', i.e. support for the State of Israel as a refuge and homeland for the persecuted. This is the thin cover that Howard Fast in his disillusionment penetrated and destroyed: 'To this date, no explanation of the utter destruction of Yiddish culture in the Soviet Union has been forthcoming, much less some comprehensible account of why the cream of Jewish writers and critics were put to death.' Feffer, Bergelson, Kvitko and others who were gaoled, beaten and shot are not mentioned when visiting writers' delegations go to Russia to learn how many million copies of Dickens or Katharine Susannah Prichard are published for the people. And no good fellow of the Fellowship of Australian Writers appears to have had the bad taste to raise their names, or perhaps even the curiosity to learn that they once existed.

THE PRICE OF QUADRANT

We have delayed as long as possible bringing the price of *Quadrant* in line with rising costs. However, the price from the next issue onwards will be FIVE SHILLINGS a copy, or ONE POUND for a year's subscription, post free as before. Subscriptions already paid will be carried forward at the old rate until the next renewal.

THE WHITE-COLLAR EMPLOYEE

PROFESSIONAL AND PROLETARIAN

R.J.O'Dea

OVER the last few years the white-collar employee has been studied with the intentness that was once kept for the miner or watersider. The most obvious reason for this is that the white-collar employee now assumes the importance in the economy of the industrial nation that was once held by the other two.

Peter F. Drucker in two articles in *The Listener*[1] reports that one group in the white-collar field, viz., the 'professional, technical and managerial people' or 'salaried middle-class people', is now the largest working group in the USA, representing one in five of the working population. This group totalling thirteen million is young and growing; whereas the group comprising the typical blue-collar worker (the machine operator) is ageing and stagnant.

This 'salaried middle-class' or 'PTM' group is of course only one part of the general class of 'white-collar employees'—another group is the mass of clerical employees without tertiary education. I would suggest that there is a growing lack of sympathy between these two groups, which the inclusive expression 'white-collar employee' serves to hide.

The growth in importance of the 'salaried middle class' has been called for by the nature of recent industrial development. Drucker says:[2]

> While there will be a real and continuing need for more highly skilled manual workers, we shall not be needing many more of the 'typical' industrial workers, the semi-skilled machine operators, the men who work on the assembly lines or in the steel mills. Indeed, the three industries in the American economy where employment is likely to grow the fastest are education, electronics, and chemistry—and all three employ primarily highly educated middle-class people rather than machine operators.

The President of the Australian Council of Salaried and Professional Associations, Paul D. Allsop, has pointed to a similar phenomenon in this country in the following words:[3]

[1] *The New Majority*, 23 October, 1958, and *Education and Future American Society*, 30 October, 1958.

[2] *The Listener*, 23 October, 1958, p. 631.

[3] AAESDA Bulletin, July 1958, p. 11.

> The value of the employee has increased. Higher educational standards are required and a higher degree of specialization. It cannot be denied that if it were not for the salaried and professional employees, particularly those in the fields of science, medicine, engineering and management, it would be a vastly poorer world. We could not have this enormous increase in material wealth if these people had not conceived the ideas, invented and designed the machines and equipment, and organized and planned their efficient use.

The expression 'white-collar employee' however more naturally conjures up a picture of the diligent, sober clerk rather than the PTM types referred to specifically in this latter quotation. What place do these clerical workers assume in the community?

David Lockwood in his study, *The Black-Coated Worker*, divides the history of the clerk into the 'counting house' and the 'modern office' periods. In both periods the skills acquired by the clerk are peculiar to a narrow field of employment. During the 'counting house' period, however, the 'moneyless and friendless clerk' was not remote from the proprietor-manager. There were many examples of his type reaching managerial rank, and consequently ambition stimulated the adoption of a class consciousness and of conventions at odds with their true class position as proletarians.

The clerk in the modern office—whether in public service, banking, insurance or commerce—is remote *not only from the proprietors but also from the new managerial class*. Ambition can no longer assist the clerk to stomach a low salary as he sees the managerial-staff positions are increasingly filled by 'lateral recruitment' of accountants and graduates. 'From postal clerk to Director-General of the PMG' has become virtually impossible.

The older clerical outlook is imaged in the following expression of nineteenth-century opinion:[4]

> But how comes it, if the pay is so miserably insufficient . . . that the cry is 'still they come'? Is it not because clerks are socially gentlemen—treated as such and allowed to dress as such? Clerks, like officers in the army and the navy, or like clergymen, have a position as well as a salary. They pride themselves on that position. In virtue thereof they indulge in much liberty of action which other classes of servants do not enjoy. They call themselves their masters' equals and demand recognition as such. And in dress, assumption, everything within their power, they follow this up, affording themselves much gratification and realizing substantial advantages from the nature of their vassalage. Now, sir, let them consider this as part of their remuneration. Or if they object to do so, let them cease to put themselves forward as 'educated gentlemen'. . . .
>
> BENJAMIN BATTLEAXE

[4] B.G.Orchard, *The Clerks of Liverpool*, 1871, p. 44.

Recently sandwichmen tramped the streets of Melbourne bearing the legend *Money, Money Everywhere and Not Enough To Live On—Bank Officers' Big Meeting Today.* Although ill-at-ease, it was apparent that the sandwichmen were not bank officers. Their demeanour more probably reflected incredulous surprise that their occasional employers should reject genteel secrecy for display of poverty.

At the meeting thus announced a large attendance applauded the statement of one official: 'We've got a right to withold our labour if it is not being paid for at a decent rate.'[5] Similar militant attitudes have been struck by other white-collar groups. Delegates of the Administrative and Clerical Officers' Association (Commonwealth Public Service) considered that strike action might have to be contemplated if the Public Service Board continued to reject negotiation concerning claims for increased salaries filed with the Arbitration Commission.

Public demonstration of dissatisfaction with status or salary in Australia is not, however, necessarily an indication of proletarian character. With the growth in impersonality of employers and of formality in the procedures for settling employer-employee relationships, publicity of aims and grievances arises naturally. This development is encouraged by the growth in public-relations content in the Press, and by the need felt by organizations to reach their members and encourage a sympathetic public opinion.

The Public Service and the organizations of private-industry employers have industrial experts to negotiate on employment matters; but these individuals have little responsibility in bargaining, and welcome the arbitration of 'industrial disputes'. Similarly white-collar organization officials, like trade-union officials generally, prefer to rely on the 'conscience of the community' as interpreted by arbitration tribunals.[6]

This unwillingness to take responsibility in bargaining is not found only in industrial officers: in fact the employers themselves, notably the Railways Departments, rely almost entirely on arbitration to decide wages and salaries. An interesting example of the unwillingness of an employer to assume responsibility for negotiation with employees was shown when the NSW University of Technology Staff Association sought an award from the Industrial Commission. Perhaps Mr John Kerr, Q.C., should have looked to the lack of independent respon-

[5] ABOA Journal, May, 1959.

[6] cf. Dr E.P.Kelsall, 'The Decline of Conciliation in Industrial Relations', *The Australian Quarterly*, June, 1959.

sibility of the University authorities rather than to the attitude of the Staff Association when he made the following remarks:[7]

> The adoption of the black ban strategy against the University of Tasmania by this University Staff Association is perhaps more understandable, if no more defensible, because it has in the past frankly accepted the notion of the employee status of its members. On that basis it applied to the NSW Industrial Commission for and obtained an award as to the salary of its members. The adoption of the 'strike' and 'boycott' mentality is a not unnatural next step.

Much of the tactics in industrial relations of white-collar organizations must, I suggest, be placed more in the category of the public relations activity of the pressure group than in the conventions of the militant trade union. There is a close parallel between the white-collar protest meeting and that of the outer-suburban Progress Association protesting against indifference to their needs on the part of water, sewerage and roadmaking authorities. There is a recognition by both that impersonal bureaucracies have one sure sensitive area, their public relations.

It is well to remember that the vigorous public protest is equally a characteristic of the independent 'yeoman' type as the desperate proletarian.

There is a tendency to assume homogeneity in the white-collar field. This led the Institute of Public Affairs to correlate various protests as indicating a general mounting dissatisfaction with inflation, increasing taxation and declining incomes throughout the middle classes.[8] The middle classes for this argument included the retired living on savings, professional men in private practice and salaried employment, managers, accountants, and ratepayers in certain suburbs. This group although 'amazingly patient' and until recently showing only 'signs of irritation and restlessness' but never reaching 'the stage of revolt' were now giving indications that further additions to their burdens 'will not be accepted without powerful protest; nor without far-reaching political implications'.

But actually among the salariat there are two antipathetic movements. These can be characterized as the *professional* and the *proletarian*.

An established profession is characterized by the following features:—

(*a*) an education discipline of tertiary standard;

[7] 'Academic Freedom and Academic Boycott', *The Australian Quarterly* December, 1958.

[8] 'The Forgotten Man—1957', *IPA Review*, April-June, 1957, p. 39.

(*b*) a tradition of dedication to service apart from financia reward;
(*c*) a tradition of co-operation among its members;
(*d*) a measure of control by the profession itself over entry into the profession and the power to discipline its members for breach of the profession's code of ethics;
(*e*) a monopoly of practice.

In Australia only Law and Medicine have all five of these marks. Architecture, Engineering and other vocations possess some of the five, and the energies of its members are directed above all else to securing the others.

In many occupations one can find this pursuit of professional character. Various consultants, accountants, production planners, etc., set up institutes which require a qualification or provide some examination for entry, entitle members to the use of letters after their names, adopt a code of ethics, and endeavour to exclude the 'unqualified' from the field. Whether the adoption of professional features stems from a desire to protect the public from charlatans or to obtain a monopoly of practice, the traditional professions are studied as models.

It must be remembered that along with dedication to service the traditional professions have not been indifferent to financial reward. To protect this financial reward forms of boycott and blacklisting are commonly practised. Notices of the following kind are not infrequently inserted in medical organization journals: 'The vacancy of Medical Officer with the State Health Department has not been advertised because the salary is considered insufficient for the experience required.'

When newer vocational groups aspiring to professional status become sufficiently confident of the support of their members, similar methods are practised. The traditional professions are however their mentors, and all projects are scrutinized to see that there is no conflict with the fundamental aim of obtaining recognition by the community as a profession.

In seeking a monopoly of practice, the aspirant vocation must insist on the importance of qualifications. The threat to this ambition is from two directions, from the person 'who has learnt the hard way' and the administrator who is seeking managerial rank. The morale of the qualified engineer employed by the State Railways systems is depressed because of the large numbers of unqualified 'engineers' in the engineering hierarchy. The promotion to managerial posts in technical undertakings of clerks, accountants, or legal officers is probably more conducive to low morale among technical specialists than any other cause.

The 'salaried middle class' is composed of people who have professional status or aspire to it. They place education for themselves and their children above a new car. Their interests in reading lie in 'improving' material—history, foreign affairs, art, philosophy and religion. They have more to lose than gain by immersing themselves in the broad white-collar group.

What of the clerk? With the increasing opportunities for able children to reach tertiary education, financial difficulties alone are becoming less important in causing 'wastage of talent'.[9] A lack of sympathy with academic work among parents and friends is probably a more significant factor. Among recruits to clerical employment there will be fewer people who belong to families who encourage social and intellectual ambition. This feature coupled with the growth in size and impersonality of the employing organization makes it less likely that the clerical group will provide recruits to the higher administrative posts. If encouragement to proceed to tertiary education is absent at sixteen it will probably be absent when the clerk is contemplating a part-time course of study.

With less avenue for ambition, the clerk considers he has a further grievance, namely, the faster rising living standards of the manual worker since before the war.

Pre-war days have a glamour for the clerk. That was the period, the recent recruits are told, when their seniors built their *crédit foncier* homes in Glen Iris and employed part-time domestic help. At the meeting of bank officers referred to above, an official said that 'as a group bank officers are living far worse than the plumbers next door'. I would suggest that the more weighty grievance is that the plumbers *are* now living next door.

Unlike the salaried middle class which, as I suggested above, contemplates boycotting as a professional weapon, the clerk contemplates it because he considers that the manual worker has obtained his more rapid increase in financial reward because of militancy. The clerk considers that his employer has treated him shabbily because of confidence that the clerk would not strike. The strike weapon has assisted the manual worker, the clerk considers, in two ways—one, in forcing his employer to give increases in wages and conditions; and two, in speeding the processes of arbitration.

It might be instructive to look at the position respectively

[9] Dr W.C.Radford, 'The Search for Talent', *Australian Journal of Science*, February, 1959.

of the fitter and turner and the clerk in the Commonwealth Public Service. The adult fitter and turner, perhaps a member of the Left Wing-led Amalgamated Engineering Union, is on weekly hiring, works a forty-hour week for £17 15s. per week and is eligible for two incremental rises of 7s. 6d. per week. The fitter and turner would have his Junior Technical Certificate (Intermediate standard) and have completed a four-year apprenticeship with classes at the Technical College. The clerk with Leaving Certificate obtains £15 10s. per week at twenty-one years for a thirty-six and three-quarter hour week, progresses automatically to £18 15s. per week after four years, and is a permanent public servant. The clerk quite clearly has retained substantial advantages over men who have been schooled longer.

Where the personal character of the 'counting house' period remains, e.g., in solicitors' offices, the first determination of the Victoria Law Clerks' Wages Board shows even greater recognition of the clerk. With no secondary education required, a law clerk at twenty-one years is paid £16 19s. per week and in his fifth year £20 19s. per week.

That direct action speeds the processes of arbitration has probably some truth. However, although constitutional interpretation has reduced 'industrial dispute' in the Commonwealth Constitution to little more than genuine disagreement indicated by the service and the refusal of a log of demands, the original intention of the arbitration tribunal was, and in practice the tendency of today is to speed those claims about which dislocation of industry may occur.

Henry Bournes Higgins gave as his principal reason for seeking the conciliation and arbitration power the need to provide a means of preventing disputes causing dislocation of industry. He made this point in Melbourne in 1898.[10]

> MR HIGGINS: Judges and juries go to a great deal of trouble with regard to disputes arising between John Smith and Bill Sykes as to private affairs between them.
>
> MR KINGSTON: And over matters involving not more than 5s.
>
> MR HIGGINS: Yes, or even matters involving less than that. But we have no courts which provide machinery for settling disputes which arise, where not only are individuals concerned but where hundreds and thousands and tens of thousands of people are concerned, and where not merely the interests of the people in the dispute are affected but hosts of people and families dependent upon them are affected, and where the whole course of trade may be diverted, as there is danger of trade being diverted in consequence of the engineers' strike in England.

[10] National Australasian Convention Debates, January-February, 1898.

Although it is understandable that arbitration tribunals should respond to the need to avoid industrial warfare, cynicism is inevitably encouraged by speedy handling of the claims of organizations which may have been fined for contempt for striking over the claims.

The clerical organization probably has an additional reason for adopting militant attitudes. This is, as C. Wright Mills suggests,[11] the desire to enrich a sober routine with adventure. Care must be taken however that the expression of militancy is not met by the calling of bluff. It is interesting however that recent expressions of militancy have met with such support from the membership that it appears that the need for care against extravagance has not been reached.

R. J. O'Dea

[11] *White Collar: The American Middle Classes*, 1951.

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THE BABU FROM BENGAL

M.K.Abdullah

SHE WAS sitting in the sun and I called out to her.

'Grandmother Shah!'

'Ah, Nimmi,' she said. She opened her eyes. 'It is you, is it?—Come to destroy my peace again.'

'They sent me,' I said. 'They *sent* me. I have to tell you that a stranger has come to the house. He is called the Babu from Bengal.'

'That is not his name, not his title, child. That is what he is.'

'What is he?'

'He is a babu, a Hindu who can read and write, a clerk, a half-educated educated-man.'

'I can read and write. What good is half-educated? Am I a babu too?'

'Babus are Hindus like me. You are a Muslim. And you are not even half-educated yet. You have very bad manners.'

'What do babus do?'

'Questions and questions! They write letters for people who are not educated at all.'

'Is the Babu going to write a letter for you?'

'No, no, no!' Grandmother Shah was laughing. 'He has not written a letter for anyone since The Quarrel.'

'What quarrel?'

'Stories and stories! It was a long time ago. It was *then*, and this is *now*. . . .

Then there were lots of our people here—Punjabis like your father's people, Pathans like my husband's. They were all Muslims. Only the Babu and I were Hindus.

I remember the first time I saw him. My husband was away with the camel teams. I was staying on his brother's farm. It was a lonely time for me. My brother-in-law had his farm to busy him. His wife had her children. At that time, I had none of my own. They were good to me, they welcomed my visits, but their ways were not my ways and they did not remember me or anything that I had ever known. Only my husband could remember. I was glad to see a Hindu come to the farm.

He drove up to the house in his waggon. We heard him before we could see him. It was an old waggon and it made a clicking, rattling noise like pieces of wood being hit together. It was

wood. And when we went out to look at it, we saw a great sign saying—*Hurri Chanda Mukerji, Clerk B.A.*—and written beside the B.A. in very small letters, the one word—*failed.*

The Babu looked *then* the way he looks *now.* He had steel rimmed glasses and wore white clothes. He had bandy legs and he had no teeth. He wore an enormous turban and he seemed to be bowing to you all the time. It may have been good manners but I think, I really think, it was the weight of his turban. He had come to write up the farmers' books, to write what letters they needed. His fees were high, but he was known and necessary. I remember how politely he stood in front of my brother-in-law, listening and hardly speaking, his head nodding with agreement or the weight of his turban.

But with me he was different. To me he could talk. And how we talked that first time! The places he had seen in his travels in India—the places that were home to me, the last time he had celebrated diwali, how his young brothers had flung red powder into his face to celebrate the birth of spring, how his mother had hung a sacred thread around his neck the day he was to leave the village. How she cried and said that she would never see him again! All these were things that any Hindu knew. "I remember," I kept saying, "I can remember . . ." and I cried too. "I will never see any of it again."

"You will, you will," said the Babu. "When you are rich, and all the camels carry gold, you will go home. I will go home. My mother will see me again. I will give her back the sacred thread."

He never went, and neither did I. We did not realize *then* that Australia was home.

When the walk was ended, the reminding and remembering finished, there were other things to remember. There was *now.* The Babu was not happy. "Money," he moaned. "Money. Where is it? Who has it? How can a poor man get it? These Muslims—these Muslims!—they will not write letters. They know nothing of love. They write letters of business, letters to governments, letters of money—they ask me to write them two letters a year."

It was because of this that he started The Quarrel.

He was doing the books at Ishak Khan's place. Ishak was boasting—as his son does now—about the wonder of his farm, the lushness of the grass, the sleekness of the cows, the Muslim magnificence of his tomatoes. "Is it true then," said the Babu with gentle surprise, "your farm is doing well?"

"Of course my farm is doing well!"

"I was wrongly informed then," said the Babu. "Or perhaps misunderstood."

"Who? Who?" growled Ishak Khan. "Who has wrongly informed you?"

"I was talking the other day to your neighbour Mahmoud Ali—"

"Mahmoud Ali! What did the liar say?"

"He only said that he had heard that your cows had the disease. He warned me against eating your beef—"

"My beef is perfect! It is killed the proper way! I will force his Mahmoud Ali to eat it. He will see if my cattle is sick!"

He should, of course, have forced the meat upon the Babu. He should, of course, have remembered that no Hindu would eat beef anyway. But *should* is a difficult word, and Ishak Khan was an angry man; *should* is a humble word, and Ishak Khan was a proud man. He roared with anger, roared like cattle. His wife and sons came running. "Wretch!" he was shouting. "Wretch! Evil, jealous wretch!"

He was moving towards the door, his great fists clenched, his great voice muttering insults. It was as if he were going straight to Mahmoud Ali's farm. He was stopped by the Babu's gentle Hindu voice.

"Mahmoud Ali deserves your anger," he was saying, "but I do not think it is wise to go up to his house."

"Wise? Wise? What is wise to do with a wretch who pretends to be a friend?"

"Wise is to do with everything," said the Babu. "If you go to the house Mahmoud Ali will call out a greeting. He will wish you peace. He will call you brother. He will welcome you formally into his house. It is, I believe, the custom among the Muslims. You will not be able to insult him then, it would be impolite."

Ishak Khan nodded. "True," he said.

"True," said his wife and sons. And they nodded too.

"If I may be permitted to offer a suggestion." The Babu was soft and gentle—like a snake. "A letter," he suggested.

"Yes! A letter! A letter to make him ashamed! A letter!" They were all in agreement—Ishak Khan, his wife, his sons, the Babu. "I will sit down and write it now," said Ishak Khan.

"No. No. No." said the Babu. "If you write in your language, you must preserve the forms. You must begin with greetings, with blessings on his house and family. You should write in English. That is the language for business and rudeness. If you wrote in English, he could not mistake your feelings."

"True. True," said Ishak Khan. He nodded as he thought about it. His wife and his sons—they nodded too. So did the Babu.

"You will write this letter for me now," he said to the Babu. "I cannot write English. The letter will start *Dear Bad Friend. . .*"

The Babu kindly wrote the letter, and kindly collected his fee. He delivered it to Mahmoud Ali's, and collected the fee for delivery. The letter was beautifully phrased so as to have effect and to give no reason for its tone and anger. It was a savage, unprovoked surprise and, after a suggestion from the Babu, Mahmoud Ali dictated a reply. The Babu collected his fee.

Letter followed letter—letters written down by the Babu, letters for which the Babu was paid, letters the Babu delivered. The insults grew bigger and the letters grew longer. The Babu's fees became greater. His pockets were as heavy as his turban. At Ishak Khan's, at Mahmoud Ali's, he bowed and nodded, whether from weight of turban or heaviness of pockets or the need to be polite, no one will ever know. All that the rest of us knew was that the quarrel was fierce and forever, that neither farm would hear a good word of the other, and that the Babu buzzed between the two of them like a blowfly.

The men talked of it—The Quarrel. "There has been nothing like it," said Ben Yussouf, "since little Zaffir Din stole the Chinaman's bike."

"It is that Bengali bandit," said Shak Ali. "All Bengalis are bad, but the Babu is the worst of them all."

"I will grab that Hindu," said big Cassim, "by his skinny unwashed neck. And I will throw him out of the district." He flexed his muscles and blew out the ends of his moustache as though he were the fiercest of the warriors of Afghanistan. The others laughed at him and cheered him and shouted as though he were a wrestler. "Shabash! Hurrah! Shabash!"

"Children," said old Ben Yussouf. "You are like children. The Hindu is more clever than you. We know that he cheats us He knows that we know. We know that he is trouble, but what are we without him? If we send him away, who will do the books, who will write to the government?"

"My son will," said Wali Husson. They stared at him. "I sent him to Lismore. It was not to work in my brother's shop. It was not for reasons that I told you. It was so that he could go to school."

"School!"

"Yes, school," said Wali Husson. "It is a year since I paid

a penny to the Babu. My son can write my books, and write my letters. His teachers are proud of him, and so am I."

Nobody spoke and Wali Husson went on, getting more and more excited. "It is time that what we are thinking should be words. We are farmers. Our fathers were farmers. Our fathers' fathers were farmers. That was the way in the old country. But old days have old ways. It is different now. Our children were born here, this is all they know. Here you can choose. They may not want to be farmers. They may not want to marry farmers. We did not want to leave India, but we came here. We wanted for children more than hunger and work. And what do we do, what are you all doing? The white people send their children to school. We send ours to work in the paddocks. The white children are learning to choose. Ours are learning to be farmers, peasants, people the Babu can use to make money from. This is because their fathers are stubborn and dislike change."

They were all silent, disturbed, looking at him and his excitement and pride. They had forgotten The Quarrel. They were thinking of the Babu and their need for him, of Mahmoud Ali's five daughters who must marry or be nothing because they had not been taught to choose, of their own children who were learning nothing but the work of the farm. "It is the women," said Ben Yussouf. "The mothers would cry."

"The mothers would cry," said Shak Ali. "They want their own things near them. It is harder for them. We have our farms. We understand this country. We work with the earth. We know it and it's ours. We have white men as friends. But our women have no such owning, no such friends. This is not their country and its ways are not their ways. They live only in their homes, only with their children."

"They are afraid," said Ben Yussouf. "They do not want their children to despise them, to take the white men's ways and to think their mothers ignorant."

"I sent my son away," said Wali Husson. "I sent away the child of my heart. His mother prayed, begged, cried. Oh, how she cried! But I went out into the fields and worked my land. I did not let her see me cry. And soon, like me, she found that there was no time for tears—there were the cows to milk, the chickens to feed, the chuppatties to make. And now my son loves her really; he misses her."

"Sense!" said Shak Ali. "These are words of sense. I will send my children to school."

The other men agreed to do the same.

"And now," said Ben Yussouf, "now that we have Wali Husson's son to help us, we will go to the Babu."

They went to him in a body and told him politely (because Ben Yussouf insisted they were not to demean themselves in front of a Hindu) that his services were no longer required, that it would be more convenient if he left immediately.

The Babu was not surprised. He was used to being found out. There was nothing to be done. Like a good Hindu, he accepted the facts and packed his waggon. And then, like a bad Hindu, drove off shouting insults as he went.

Everyone expected that Ishak Khan and Mahmoud Ali would now become friends. But everyone was wrong. Pathans are stubborn, and proud, and unforgiving. Explanation was useless, cursing the Babu was useless, neither of the "friends" would make the first move although, of an evening, Mahmoud Ali would look out towards Ishak Khan's farm and say, "There is a lucky man."

But it was not the farm he was thinking of; it was Ishak Khan's children. Ishak Khan had sons, and Mahmoud Ali had none. He had his five daughters and he loved them. But what were they except dowries to pay, weddings to arrange, trouble and expense? "Ishak Khan is a happy man," he explained to Ben Yussouf. "It is sad that he has such a mean nature."

The men of the district had another meeting. They boasted of what their children were doing in the white people's school and then, only then, did they talk about The Quarrel—which was the reason they had met. "In my eighty years," said Ben Yussouf, "there has never been such foolishness."

They were all talking, suggesting ways to make the two "friends" friends when, suddenly, they heard a great shouting, a roaring like a bull. It was Ishak Khan. "Quick! Quick!" he said. "We have to go over to Mahmoud Ali's. Mahmoud Ali has had a son! One of the girls came over to tell my wife. He's had a son! That forgotten son of Allah has been given a son." Ishak Khan was dancing with excitement, while the others stared at him. But when he made them understand, it was he who led them to Mahmoud Ali's.

Mahmoud Ali was standing at the door—proud as the day for no man is a man until his son of sons is born. But when Ishak Khan grabbed him by the arm and cheered him, and laughed at him, and mocked him, and praised him, he could do nothing but cry—with joy for the son, and with joy for the friend.

What a celebration there was at Mahmoud Ali's that night!

The girls had been cooking all day and the women had come over to help them in the afternoon. But no one had expected a son—this was the joy of joys. How everyone laughed! How they joked as they put money in the plate for the new boy! And when it was all over—the eating, the joking, the singing, the praising—then it was quite late. The hurricane lamps cast big shadows on the walls. The young children slept against their parents. The bigger ones whispered of school and the grown-ups talked of the old days and the old ways, remembered the world that used to be theirs.

'I remember,' said Grandmother Shah. 'I remember *then* as if it were *now*.'

'But the Babu?'

'Oh, he was clever!' Grandmother Shah was laughing. 'Who could be angry at a time like that? While they all sat talking, there was a gentle knocking at the door. When Mahmoud Ali opened it, there stood the Babu, bobbing like a cork in water under the weight of his enormous turban and softly—oh so softly—offering felicitations. He had bought a store in the town, and he wanted our custom. And, of course, in a way he was our friend; we were used to him. So we welcomed him and he sat down next to me and talked to me about the Hindu world that used to be ours.'

'Where are you going? Tell me some more.'

'But the Babu is up at the house. I must go and talk with my friend.'

M.K.Abdullah

A SOUTH AUSTRALIAN ALMANAC

[For the birth of Francis]

Geoffrey Dutton

While friends now bring you flowers you scarcely see
I bring you almost a year you never saw.
An island February first, tea tree

Twisted against the white unravelled shore
Where human beings can simply do and be.
The pelican draws his slow bow-ripple's flaw

Across the bay, and then the flat-footed shags
Slap the water trying so hard to fly;
Other days too, when the thumping dinghy drags

Its anchor and the waves run gunwale-high.
Through storm or calm, such loved time never lags,
From the hour when the shags hang out their wings to dry

To the night when wine-glass, net and garfish rise,
To lazy mornings when thought hops around
Silent as a wren on sand, then suddenly flies.

March for the mainland, shoes upon hard ground,
And on the softening road-tar rubber sighs,
Yet brown grass parting gives a crackling sound

And like a medieval book of hours
Jonathans are red in the green tree.
On the gulf's mirage-long beaches the tide scours

The sand of blue-legged crabs the netters see
Already cooked, clattering in rosy showers
From a blackened tin, all salty and smoky.

April of no rain, and most of May,
Merinos flourish, but the dams now stare
At the sun with pinpoint eyes, while new lambs play

Under the eagle's eye, and in despair
A crow complains at the beauty of the day,
For days are clearest when drought is in the air.

The pump-engine taps at silence, and the cat
Grows bored with birds and catches lizards' tails,
Until the dusty, steamy dusk falls flat

On the earth-face. Drops make holes, the soil inhales,
One thunder-clap knocks out the light, and rat
And rabbit are flooded out to join the snails.

Dampened black, and sheep not wanting shade.
Rosellas slide around the hawthorn berries
Cutting the husks to ground, and unafraid

Robins flirt while cats sleep in the sun.
One morning, where there had been level green,
Frost leaves a forest of grass blades, every one

Alone, silver and separate and lean.
Perfect elegance is always spun
From coldness, but here such clothes are seldom seen,

For elegance, when branding rams' horns, fails
As the sickening smoke floats up from the red-hot brand
Over the silver grain of the woolshed rails.

July has tyres that hiss on the glistening tar
And in the hills dry creeks are tumbling streams
A foot across. Through lowering cloud, not far

Away, the trees are distant-close as dreams;
At night, a fuzzy moon but not one star.
In August the clouds are poured, a sea that creams

And foams between the ranges, far from beaches
Shrunken and weed-stacked by the winter tide.
Through the weeping trees a black cocky screeches.

Lazy on its wings, and the dogs ride
The scent of rabbits, Puff's yell overreaches,
Pim's command breaks wide the blackberry hide,

And a kookaburra laughs as the rabbit goes to ground.
In September waterfalls spout from the sleek green hills
And my beans are swept away; better are found

In the market anyway, where the hall fills
Up with New Australian women and the sound
And scent of voices going with schinken and pickles,

And jagdwurst and pirager and bierwurst and sauerkraut.
Closed in their black clothes their bodies move among
The five ripe senses of the fertile market

Where nothing is foreign to a tasting tongue.
Bad is a five-foot conger eel stretched out
Across the streaming fish-shop window, swung

By its mean mouth and thin, ungenerous tail;
Good is grapefruit sunny in a stall.
These spring nights Japanese magnolias sail

In the moonlight like white cockatoos, dark boughs all
Hidden, and the mopoke haunts the pale
And windless valley with his double call.

By day the wattles cast clouds on planes of distance
And such heavy incense for the rites of spring
Shames our accepting, secular existence.

Galahs, grey in the umber fallow, fling
Pink flowers in the pastures of the sky, the sense
Of summer is in all the birds, the spinebills swing

Among their favourite fuchsias upside down,
And at night in the new moon the willy-wagtail
Sings to the sleeping gardens of the town,

Our local, typically irreverent nightingale.
Into this subtle October comes a clown
Of a myall and saltbush wind, and fig-leaves wholesale

From the Moreton Bays go flapping round the squares.
In that hot wind's home the long-tongued desert pea
Around its boss of burnished blackness flares

Scarlet from the lean land, as passionately
As the stockman sings to his guitar. It tears
His sheila-empty heart: 'Oh first you made me

Live and then you made me love and now
You make me die.' But still he lives. And soon
In the wistaria-drifted city, where the bow-

Wave of the swan ripples the afternoon
Of a dozen ducklings under a willow bough,
A baby should be born. Then, from the swoon

And thrust of violence a stranger's hand
Draws you, Francis, into the November air.
What an honest child it is, to understand

No joy exists without pain. You can share
Now all these local things of sea and land;
You'll never find a place like this elsewhere,
So love it, deserts find harvests. You are its heir.

TO GET AHEAD, YOU MUST LOOK AHEAD!

How often do we hear the man who feels he has made some little progress in life confide that he is "doing a little coasting", or that he is "marking time"?

What a lamentable piece of self-deception that is! The truth is that nobody, anywhere, can stand still for long. If a man at any time does not positively know he is actively progressing, of this he can be sure — he is slipping back, losing his grip, being overtaken and passed. To get ahead, one must always look ahead, always have a plan, and always keep moving.

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BRITISH LABOUR: NEW AND OLD

James Jupp

THE MEN who are running the British Labour movement today became politically aware in the thirties. Hugh Gaitskell took General Strike pamphlets between London and Oxford in 1926, supported the United Front during the Depression, wrote a report on Social Credit for the Labour Party in 1935 and had a humble part, under the shadow of Evan Durbin, in G.D.H.Cole's Fabian 'younger set', the New Fabian Research Bureau. Aneurin Bevan has sat in Parliament since 1928, saw his native Tredegar reduced to total unemployment, spoke at the Unemployed Congress in Bermondsey in 1934, supported Stafford Cripps's Popular Front in 1937 and was expelled from the party in 1939 for failing to repudiate Sir Stafford. Even the lesser men, the smooth-faced, interchangeable public school boys around Gaitskell, felt their consciences stirred by the Left Book Club. They came through the war as Fabian-influenced administrators, and found themselves behind Mr Attlee in the Parliament of 1945.

Further down the Party the older generations, the men of the 'Red Clyde', of the General Strike, of the ILP, the men who saw Keir Hardie and can still remember all the verses of the 'Red Flag', are slowly passing on. There were many more of them when I first came into the Party after the war. One who stands out was a full-time propagandist against vivisection and vaccination, a man in his late seventies, one of the first socialist propagandists in our rather respectable suburb. He had seen Prince Kropotkin speak at an anarchist gathering of the nineties at which there had been seven self-appointed chairmen. One recollection was of a well-known local rabble-rouser of pre-1914 days who had perorated: 'The workers need no leaders,' to be greeted with the answering roar: 'That's right Tom, we'll follow you to the end.'

The boys who had their heads turned in the thirties were already less elemental than those who went before. In their turn they have educated a younger generation which is so sophisticated that it is no longer sure whether it wants to go on being 'Labour'. Communism, which was accepted as a wing of Labour in the twenties, and graduated to a kind of middle-class reformism after 1936, has done its work of disillusion as surely as growing prosperity and security. Before the war most Leftists accepted Communism for Russia and radical

socialism for England in the same breath. There was no contradiction. The extraordinary Shapurji Saklatvala, a Parsee, had sat in Parliament for Battersea as a Labour MP when everyone knew he was also in the Communist Party. Even as late as 1935, Willie Gallacher, the popular Communist MP for West Fife, applied for the Labour Whip on his return to Parliament. The now famous *Workers' Weekly* injunction that 'the lower organs of the party penetrate the backward portions of the proletariat', was carried through assiduously. The first application for Communist affiliation to Labour was made in 1920 and the last in 1946. Only the frenetic 'social-fascist' spasm of 1928 to 1933 broke the continuity. John Strachey, writing in *Left Book Club News* of September 1936, saw Communist affiliation as 'the indispensable foundation stone upon which a Peoples' Front for Britain can alone be built'. Even the late G.D.H.Cole could not see 'any sharp line which marks off British Communists from other British Socialists'. It is this skeleton in the cupboard of practically all active Labour politicians which inhibits them from making up their minds how socialist they want to be in the coming decade.

The British Left has passed through three distinctive periods in the lifetime of its leaders and active members. In each, the banners of the past have been dragged in the mud by those who previously bore them. This has disillusioned many, but it has also contributed to the maturity of the movement. There are still a few whose attitudes are fixed in the twenties: the pacifists, prohibitionists and syndicalists. There are more who cannot get out of the thirties, who still hanker after the 'Popular Front'. Generally, though, it would be difficult for much of the Labour movement to hang on to out-of-date attitudes. An example of this rejection of the past may be taken from the youth movement, a once important part of the British Labour Party, now sadly weakened. In the thirties the Labour League of Youth was almost completely under Communist influence. At its Manchester Conference of 1936 it agreed by eighty-two votes to seventy-five to join a 'United Front of working-class youth organizations'. For three years it fought with the senior Party on this issue, allying itself with Sir Stafford Cripps. Its paper, *Advance*, was edited by members who subsequently joined the Young Communist League. This would have been unthinkable after the war. The League of Youth was still warring with the senior Party—that was its nature—but the 'Stalinist' position had no hold. If anything the leading element was 'Trotskyist', centred on people who had left the YCL after the expulsion

of Tito from the Cominform. The refusal of the youth movement to touch the Communist Party had important repercussions as former League of Youth members attained positions in the Labour Party. It has been virtually impossible to find a single genuine 'fellow-traveller' in most active Labour Parties for eight or nine years now. The Communists have been unable to recruit from the Labour Party. In the thirties 'fellow-travelling' bodies like the Friends of the Soviet Union helped channel thousands out of the Labour Party into the Communist ranks. Today, anti-Stalinist left-wingers in the Labour Party have guided thousands out of the Communist Party. The presence of this non-Communist Left was perhaps the main feature in the rapid collapse of the Communist Party after 1956. Without a spiritual home, many would have stayed in the Communist Party, even after Hungary. With friends and like-minded comrades in the Labour Left they were quite glad to get out of the discredited Communist Party.

The passing of the oldsters and the discrediting of old causes has been painful but salutary. Painful, because the heart of the old Labour Party was sound: the British working-class was too sensible to be taken in by Russia, too solid to run after the United Front with high-fliers like Maxton and Cripps. Salutary, because it was also too unimaginative to see the need for militant agitators and radical slogans. This was a weakness, nowhere more firmly established than in the Trade Union leadership, and in the Labour Parties of the industrial districts. The Labour Party had, and still has, an imperfectly developed corporate life. Far too many of its activities were mundane routine. The average Labour Party resembled a Trade Union branch in dealing with business and leaving the militant member to find his political education elsewhere. Anyone who wanted more from the Party than dreary business meetings, had to turn to the Left for education and recreation in a political setting. This meant turning away from the official party. In the thirties it meant turning to the Communists.

The Labour Party, in those areas where it had most backing, sprang from the Trade Union branch, the Co-operative management committee and other businesslike and essentially non-political bodies. Much of its time was taken up with local Council affairs, the raising of money, and social activities on a small scale. Its most active members would be occupied in the countless Party and Trade Union committees which flourish in a federal, democratic organization. This stodgy existence could only be changed by the influx of enthusiastic, younger

militants. In the vital years immediately after the First World War it was the Independent Labour Party which gave the impetus to Labour, which otherwise seemed content to remain a permanent Trade Union minority in Parliament. After the defection of the ILP under Maxton in 1932, it was the Socialist League, a more 'bourgeois-intellectual' group than the ILP, which enlivened discussion and policy-making. Again, in the post-war years, it was the Labour Left, identified after 1950 as the 'Bevanites', who kept the Party bubbling with discussion and dissension. The traditional balance of forces in British Labour was that of a solid, reliable, rather dull industrially based Party, goaded into action by hornets on the Left. Today the Left stings with less conviction, and the party machine, based on the industrial workers, rolls along with less momentum. Intellectual disillusion on the one hand, growing prosperity on the other, are transforming the Labour Party.

The process working itself out since 1945 has changed the public face of the Party. It is not yet clear whether the Party itself has changed fundamentally. What is more likely is that there is a growing gap between the attitudes of the leadership and the membership, with the latter following familiar patterns of thought and behaviour and the former breaking new ground. The gap is, perhaps, not so much ideological as physical. Hugh Gaitskell is closer in thinking to his own Left wing than Ramsay MacDonald ever was. Socially he is much further away. In experience and general attitudes to life he is quite distinct from his own rank-and-file as Hardie, MacDonald or Lansbury were not. He is surrounded by future leaders more socially homogeneous than ever before, and less representative of the Labour movement than ever before. They draw on middle-class liberal values. The party draws on working-class radicalism and its own experience of the inter-war depression. This is not to say that Gaitskell has not had a beneficial influence on the party's thinking. He has destroyed a lot of intellectual deadwood left over from the forties. He has helped to oil the machine which grew rusty when Herbert Morrison stopped tending it. But he cannot help standing above the movement rather than being a part of it. He has tried to live down his isolation on the extreme right-wing between 1950 and 1956, when he was in the habit of referring to the whole of the Left as 'Communists or fellow-travellers'. No one active at that time could have made such a mistake had he been in touch with opinion on such matters as German re-armament within the local parties. Gaitskell made the mistake, and it made

him very popular with right-wing trade union officials. But it disheartened the local militants. They have not taken him completely to their hearts even now.

The dilemma of British Labour leadership is that as the Party has become more involved in 'social-engineering' it has attracted members of higher intellectual calibre and social status. This was necessary and desirable, but it has made the Party more like the early twentieth-century Liberal Party, and less like the sort of thing its members think it is and want it to be. The whole class character at the top has changed, and changed more quickly than in the party or the country as a whole. The Parliamentary Labour Party of 1906 was completely working-class in origin. This was the year of the Liberal-Radical landslide in class-conscious Edwardian England. All the middle-class intellectuals, even the Webbs to some extent, were pinning their hopes on Asquith and Lloyd George. Against this background the Labour MPs stood out starkly. Alfred Gill of Bolton started work at seven. T.Glover of St Helens started in the mines at nine. D.J.Shackleton was a weaving half-timer at nine. Will Thorne was an orphan at seven, working in a ropewalk and Will Crooks had been brought up in the workhouse. Apart from Philip Snowden who had worked his way into the Civil Service, all had the humblest of lives before entering Parliament. Today, it is true, no one could have the same background. What is interesting is that in the top levels of the Party the leadership not only does not have a comparable background, but is not working-class in origin in any generally accepted sense of the term. It is sometimes argued, particularly by the Party intellectuals themselves, that the more intelligent workers, whose only avenue for promotion in the past had been the labour movement, are now 'creamed off' by the educational process. Michael Young's recently published *Rise of the Meritocracy* makes this point forcibly. Whether true or not, this does not explain the predominance of hereditary members of the professional classes among the party leaders. The old-style trade union official is there on sufferance in small numbers, but the educated man of working-class origins is not. Mr Harold Wilson, often paraded as the 'barefoot boy' of the new intellectuals, comes, according to those who knew him in his youth, from impeccably middle-class surroundings. Only Aneurin Bevan and George Brown, poles apart politically, bring working-class attitudes into the top ranks of the workers' party.

The elimination of the working-class from the leadership of their own party could have demoralizing effects. It may be that

there is no alternative if a high level of political maturity and informed opinion is to be maintained. If so the basic philosophy of the movement for a century has been mistaken. The assumption on which Labour went into politics seriously was that the working man was as good as his master, and with education and a decent living standard could achieve anything. What seems to have happened, on the face of it, is that the British political process has consistently thrown up the same sort of leaders from the same classes during the whole of the past seventy-five years or so. Ramsay MacDonald is still the only Prime Minister to have come from the working-class, though Lloyd George has some claim. The three Labour Cabinets of 1923, 1929 and 1945 are still the only ones to have a working-class majority. In the case of the Attlee government, the professional classes rose rapidly to positions of power under Labour leadership, positions which they have consolidated ever since. Mr Gaitskell's Cabinet would largely be chosen from among them.

The old generation of working-men has passed on. The Left wing idealists have lost their illusions. What is left? Actually a lot more than outsiders give credit for. The British Labour Party is still one of the most intellectually alive, effective political forces in the world. On the policy sub-committees of its central executive, professors sit side by side with union officials and local councillors. Not a word of official policy is printed that has not been scrutinized by highly trained experts in the field. The mathematical appendix to the pamphlet *National Superannuation* still stands as the most complex piece of academic work to be published by any English-speaking party in this decade. What is more, this intensity of approach reaches far down into the rank-and-file. A new, livelier generation has taken over the Left after it broke up in confusion in the early fifties. The writer can remember the four dreary years between 1952 and 1956 when this breaking-up process was taking place. The life seemed to have been sapped out of the Party for good. In my own ward, a Labour vote which had been painstakingly built up to three thousand five hundred since 1945, sagged down to nine hundred. The ward party ceased to function. The Labour League of Youth which had claimed eight hundred branches in 1952 faded away to nothing and was disbanded in 1956. Everyone knew in 1955 that Labour would lose and nobody really cared very much. The party leaders, Attlee, Dalton, Morrison, Shinwell and the rest had an average age approaching seventy. All this has changed, though the bout

of anaemia has left many local parties weaker than they should be. Some of the old life has come back into the party with the new generation on the Left. The Aldermaston March, when fifteen thousand turned out to urge the banning of atom bombs was not officially Labour; but there could have been few marchers who were not Labour supporters. Nor is this new life due to Communist pressure. The Labour Party filled the Albert Hall with a protest on Hungary as effectively as it did for the 'Eden Must Go' meeting.

This 'new Left' which has arisen is much more sophisticated, and of necessity much less certain of itself than its predecessors. In the thirties the high mark of self-confidence was reached. Laski, Strachey and Cripps were utterly convinced of their correctness. History does not agree: Russia and the United Front were not the hope of the world; Chamberlain was not a fascist. In part the Left was correct, but not as absolutely correct as it thought at the time. The same is true of the Left in the forties, which drew on the vast residual literature of the past decade in forming its attitudes. As we marched down Oxford Street in the pouring rain of May Day, 1948, chanting 'Peace or Bevin—You Can't Have Both', we little realized that he would be Britain's last great Foreign Secretary to date, and that we would be much closer to destruction eight years after his death than we were then. The 'new Left' has in part learned its lesson. Many of its supporters are ex-Communists who are much wiser for their passage from the 'camp of peace'. Others have studied the history of the Left in some detail, and learned from the past. A much higher level of education and information, and a much lower pressure of political enthusiasm seem to be the main tempering factors. Consider the authors of *Conviction*, the latest statement of opinion on the Left. All but two of its contributors have the supreme confidence of public school and university backgrounds. Many are professional academics. Again, the 'Victory for Socialism' movement has a high percentage of university men among its leaders. Most important of all, perhaps, the 'Universities and Left Review' movement is reaching far down among the educated young Left in the secondary schools. Its Partisan Coffee House in London attracts the usual espresso types, but its profits go to support an excellent magazine.

Mass organizations do not change quickly. Many of the developments of the past three decades which are outlined above have been superficial. The average ward or local Labour party may in many cases be basically the same as it was twenty

years ago. It may even be run by the same people. There are permanent undercurrents in the party which changes of leadership do not affect. That is why Mr Gaitskell has changed many of his views since he became leader to fit in with traditional attitudes of which he earlier seemed contemptuous. This continuity of outlook and practices is not such a bad thing. It gives the movement stability, although it may infuriate the younger and more intelligent militants. Many of the Party's traditional reactions are worthy in themselves and in their ancestry. Because of its humanism, going back beyond Hardie and Morris to Ruskin and the Chartists, the British socialist movement cannot be taken in by the spurious ends-and-means equation of Communism. Because of its organization, going back beyond Hunderson to the Rochdale co-operators and the craft unions, the party is less likely to split or to fall into disrepair than other mass organizations. Above all, because of its century-old democratic heritage, the party members cannot be talked or bullied into passive acceptance, however strong or well-informed their leaders may be. The combination of powerful traditions with a trained, intelligent leadership makes British Labour the most powerful force in world social-democracy. It has saved it from becoming as passé as many other nineteenth-century movements.

James Jupp

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SNOW WHITE AND THE H-BOMB

Gwen Kelly

ONE EVENING I sat on the edge of my five-year-old daughter's bed. It was time for the story, the nightly ritual, the last half-hour of her waking day.

'Well,' I said, 'what do you want tonight?'

'Snow White,' she replied promptly.

I was weary so I picked up the abridged version of the tale, the one especially designed for children her age. She watched me warily, suspicion growing at the back of her eyes. Suddenly she thrust out her hands in a gesture of rejection.

'Not that one,' she said angrily. 'I don't want that one. It doesn't say: "White as snow, red as blood, black as ebony: this time the dwarfs cannot bring you to life."'

She jumped out of bed, burrowed for a moment in the tangled collection of comics, books, hair ribbons and pocket money, then pressed into my hands the complete Grimm, full-bodied, unabridged, that belonged to my elder child.

We had our story and my daughter, calmed by the just if horrible fate of Grimm's stepmother, sank back to rest. Thoughtfully I took the two volumes away with me. A glance at both confirmed my daughter's judgment. The difference was so startling that I found myself thinking about the trend of modern child literature. A comparison of both passages will bring out my point.

The abridged version read:

> 'My dear child,' said the wicked queen in a sweet voice, 'you are working so hard, you really deserve this apple as a reward.' She disappeared quickly fearing that the little princess would recognize her. Snow White looked at the lovely red apple and bit into it. Her face turned as white as a sheet. Now she was really as white as snow! And she fell to the ground.

In the Grimm version the passage reads:

> Snow White said:
> 'I dare not let anyone come in. The dwarfs have forbidden me.'
> 'That is hard for me,' said the old woman, 'for I must take back my apples, but there is one which I will give you.'
> 'No,' answered Snow White. 'No, I dare not take it.'
> 'What, are you afraid of it?' cried the old woman. 'See, I will cut the apple in halves. Do you eat the red cheeks and I will eat the core.' The apple was so artfully made that the red cheeks alone were poisoned.

> Snow White very much wished for the beautiful apple. So, stretching out her hand, she took the poisoned part.
> Scarcely had she placed a piece in her mouth than she fell down dead upon the ground. Then the Queen, looking at her with glittering eyes and laughing bitterly, exclaimed: 'White as snow, red as blood, black as ebony. This time the dwarfs cannot bring you to life.'

The difference, moreover, lies not only in the wording of the two accounts but also in the structure of the story. In the abridged tale there is only one attempt on Snow White's life while living with the dwarfs, that which, in modern detective terminology, would be called 'the affair of the poisoned apple'. In this episode the Queen simply delivers the apple and departs, leaving Snow White to fall dead in her absence. In the original the apple is the third of an unsuccessful series. Snow White knows there is danger. She has already survived the overtight lacing, the poisoned teeth of the comb. She is on her guard. The affair of the apple then is a duel between the Queen and the Princess, a duel the Queen has to win if she is to get Snow White even to taste the fruit. It is in addition her third attempt to rid the world of her rival, and in the traditional fairytale the third is always the significant and usually the final chance. Her triumph is therefore the greater. She wants to witness it with her own eyes. Her exultant words over the body of her step-daughter symbolize the victory of evil.

If this were an isolated instance then it might be unimportant, but the reduction of children's literature to the non-aesthetic, non-ethical, the purely banal, is a general process. It is fashionable in educational circles these days to deplore the horrifying effect of the old fairy stories on children, and there is no doubt that they abound in cruelty. The fates of the wicked are sadistic, the heroes and heroines are singularly unforgiving. Even the good may be involved in tragedy. Anderson's little mermaid has to make a real sacrifice for love, the match girl finds warmth and peace only in death, the goose-girl's marriage in Grimm does not restore Fallida to life.

Accordingly to protect the young from the facts of fairytale, we are producing books that abound in the natural, books that teach children about their little feathered friends, about the people and animals of this continent. There is a stronger emphasis on past history. Books of this type, many of them excellent in their way, include *John of the Sirius*, *Verity of Sydney Town*, *Aboriginal Walk-About* and the numerous animal tales of Leslie Rees. These first rate productions, however, are swamped by hordes of second rate works of the same type.

On the educational front we meet the term 'graded vocabulary', applied to books where each word is carefully selected to meet the particular knowledge and outlook of the child at every stage of development, whether he be four or five or six or seven. I am not disputing the value of this in the teaching of reading; nor the importance of books on the natural world in an age of science; but we are in danger of selling out the arts in the child realm as surely as in the adult. Graded vocabulary is based on what the child already knows. It takes no account of the fascination of the unintelligible or partly intelligible for the child of literary sensitivity: the element of mystery that may stimulate knowledge and appreciation. Verbal music receives nothing more than an occasional nod of distant recognition. Our prize-winning children's books are beautifully and tastefully produced, but in hardly any of them is there a glimmer of literature, or any truth beyond the purely naturalistic. In the world of morals we are cultivating the banal at the expense of the universal.

There are, of course, morals in these stories, but in general they are on the sentimental and babyish level. *Wish and the Magic Nut*, one of the better written of the modern educative fantasies, finishes with Wish, the koala, learning the lesson that you have to work for your desires. At the end of the story he concludes piously, having finally reached home and mother again, 'Now I am back I don't want ever, ever to be anything else any more and I'm never going to WISH anything ever again.'

In this particular story the ending is appropriate for the age group involved, but there is barely a new book for children of any age where the ethical issues are more profound than this. As in *Wish*, the general tendency is to bolster the modern security ethic, where the highest ideal is to appreciate what you already have and conform to the group.

The prettifying of some of the great stories owes a lot to Disney. However charming the film productions, they become in written form a degradation of the original. The *Snow White* from which I first quoted was based on the Disney version. The Golden Books series chose Disney's film as the basis of their small child's *Alice in Wonderland*. In this version Carroll's immortal White Rabbit mutters as he heads for the burrow: 'I'm in a rabbit stew, oh, oh! Can't even say goodbye—hello! I'm late, I'm late, I'm late.'

No doubt a passage to make a four-year-old split its sides laughing; but it does seem a pity to educate the young only

by robbing language of its power and beauty, to reach the level of children only by replacing the figures of Andersen and Grimm, the princess and goblins of George MacDonald by that nauseating commonplace elf, Noddy, or misguided little bears like Wish.

It is not simply that we are aiming to be more scientific and in a mistaken way, more realistic. It is part of a campaign to protect our children from life, beginning with the cradle and including even the undergraduate. It is an attempt to shield them from the spiritual dilemmas of our age, from the recognition of good and evil.

John Morrison in a short story entitled *Man in the Night*, concludes: 'That was the day I learned for all time that the creatures of fable and fantasy are never half as nice as the creatures of real life.'

If by this story Morrison is arguing for the replacement of the tawdry tinsel of Christmas, the pie-in-the-sky pleadings of the evangelists, the £35,000 lottery view of life, by an understanding of real humanity, its limitations and possibilities, I should entirely agree with him. On the other hand, this belief in 'simple realism', as I shall call it, leads directly to the type of banality I have been attacking, to the trivia that constitutes the subject matter of so much Australian prose, the preoccupation with tea and damper and swaggies that dominates the pages of our novels and short stories. This banality is related to our avoidance of complexity, the mistrust of allegory, the rejection of metaphysics and ethics characteristic of the twentieth century.

In the final count it is not really from fairytales that we are seeking to protect children, but from the more important issues of life. In fact, the struggle between Snow White and her stepmother is a struggle between innocence and pride, beauty and jealousy; in the case of *The Snow Queen* between love and hate or, worse still, love and indifference, perhaps even pedantry. In other words, the struggles in these stories are fought out on the spiritual level, or if you prefer it, the level of values and aesthetics. If evil sometimes wins, if the good are not without malevolence, that is life. In these old tales our children get a glimpse of the conflicts that produced Oedipus Rex, Samson Agonistes, Lear and Hamlet.

The banality that seeks to shield the young from the facts with which in their own activities they are quite obviously acquainted, is part and parcel of the policy of such bodies as the ABC. By experience I know that references to the atom bomb are not encouraged in material submitted for the ABC

rgonauts session. But are the Argonauts all curly-headed
ngels under ten? Far from it. They are children whose ages
nge from seven to something like sixteen or seventeen. The
anagement takes pride in urging these children to discuss
rrent topics of interest. Thus we have frequent sessions of
enagers speaking moralistically on the iniquities of mothers
ho work.

This same type of precocity is encouraged throughout the
dio world in popular programmes usually entitled 'talking
children' or some equivalent, where boys and girls, some
ill in the lisping stage, are invited to give their views
n their parents' shortcomings, quite often in fields where
ey are singularly innocent of the real motives for action.
is apparently amusing to hear a ten-year-old proclaim: 'I
ckon Mum's lazy getting me to help with the washing up
very night. If she didn't go out to work I wouldn't have to do
er jobs for her,' but it would be distressing to hear children
iscuss the pros and cons of nuclear warfare.

Why? Nuclear explosion, if in our blindness we allow it
occur, is not likely to limit itself to the adult. The children
Hiroshima could not be shielded from the reality nor are they
kely to forget it. In spite of the assurances of Professor Titterton,
ne cannot help the uneasy suspicion that the Russells and
uxleys of the world may be right in foreseeing an end to all
uman activity of a civilized kind. The rights and wrongs of the
ombs on Japan raise moral as well as scientific issues that can
ardly be ignored with impunity by anyone. It is hardly fair
launch children from the gilded cage of childhood quite
nprepared into the world of adult hate. A simple, neutral,
atural universe is no refuge in a world blasted by a catastrophic
onflict of values.

How is it possible to avoid presenting our children with
ne purely banal when the twentieth century has done its best
exclude all else from its own adult thinking? In every field
f inquiry we are preoccupied with minutiae, the type of problem
nat challenges our techniques rather than our thinking. Modern
hilosophy alone illustrates the grasp that security has on our
ge, for it has become a linguistic shelter, removed from the
affling problems of a moral and metaphysical universe.

It is no longer fashionable to enquire what is reality? What
the good? We are reduced to asking what do people *mean*
hen they use these terms. It is true that the problems of meaning
re not unimportant for philosophy, but I do suggest they are
beginning not an end. Too often they are used to dismiss

problems and theories without discussion. Nevertheless these suppressed problems and theories have a disconcerting habit of raising their heads. The substitution of demands and viewpoints for goodness and truth leaves a number of everlasting questions unanswered.

I remember a paper given by Professor Boyce Gibson of Melbourne to a philosophy conference at Sydney on metaphysics as a form of poetry. While a somewhat fanciful idea, and much more in line with the Professor's general philosophic views than my own, his conception was interesting. The nature of the total universe, the conflicts of goods and evils, the rolling unintelligibility of Hegel's logic, the forms of Plato, the pluralistic god of James, there were thoughts here in the same category as my daughter's Snow White, problems related to the moral sensibility of mankind. It is not necessary to accept metaphysical explanations as true to feel the value of such studies. The philosophy of Professor John Anderson of Sydney is a reasoned rejection of the idealist metaphysical position, but the appeal of his own theories to students would have been greatly diminished if he had failed to discuss these problems, to treat them as serious.

It is not the conclusion that necessarily leads to banality, but the refusal to discuss conflicting theories, the desire to pretend that problems either do not exist or can be explained away with a few simple manoeuvres. Thus we shield not only our children but also ourselves from a universe hovering as never before on the brink of total destruction.

Yet we are all cowards. To return at my end to my starting point, the traditional unabridged fairytale, I must admit that I shirked the issue when I obtained the original version of *Red Riding Hood*. You may not realize it but the wolf eats the heroine.

'Go on, Mummy,' said my daughter as I hesitated at the unfamiliar conclusion.

And, craven that I am, I introduced the woodman and his axe to despatch the animal in one swift stroke. Why I did this, I do not know. After all, my daughter's sympathies have always been with the wolf.

Gwen Kelly

"Neither a borrower nor a lender be . . . "

Such was the advice of Polonius who, in happier circumstances, might have been Hamlet's father-in-law. But no one with the slightest understanding of modern economics would expect this maxim to be heeded to-day.

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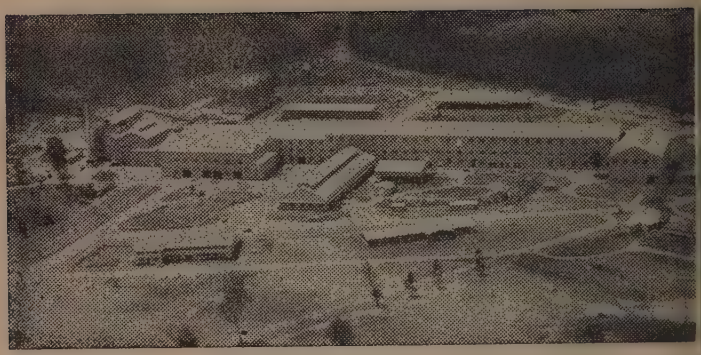

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PURITAN ENGLAND AND THE NEW JERUSALEM

Eugene Kamenka

READMISSION of the Jews to England in 1656 is widely recognized to have been the product of shrewd economic and political calculation. But it is often forgotten that it required as a condition, if not as a motive, a radical change in social climate—a new attitude to Jews markedly in contrast to that prevalent in the rest of seventeenth-century Europe, or even among the English populace only one century earlier.

Such a radical change in climate, in fact, had taken place. To some extent, of course, it was the slow fruition of the humanism born of Erasmus and More, and of the variety of political, economic and geographic factors that saw the breakup of the rigid Catholic-feudal caste society and the introduction of a 'free market in God', which inevitably led to notions of individual worth and tolerance. But especially significant for the Jews was the fact that Protestantism, and particularly English Puritanism, was part of one of those periodic renewals in a religion that rebel against dry, formalized tradition and the inevitable compromise of a powerful temporal religious organization and seek to return to the early struggling days of a genuinely inspirational and militant religious brotherhood. In the seventeenth century, even well before the Roundhead revolt, English Protestantism looked to the Early Christian Church. It assembled thirty-two great Hebrew scholars for the production of the Authorised Version of the Bible, launched a revival of the study of Hebrew and even of Aramaic and Arabic. It insisted on Hebrew as a necessary qualification for divinity students not only for the purposes of disputations with the Catholics, but in order to come 'nearer' to the primitive times of the Christian era. It was the era when Brian Walton was editing his stupendous polyglot Bible, in Greek, Hebrew, Samaritan, Caldee, Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopic, Persian and Latin, which was in progress from 1652 to 1657. The tremendous gulf that medieval Europe made between the patriarchal Jew of the Bible and the medieval Jew of the ghetto was being bridged by learning—not dramatically, perhaps, but nevertheless steadily.

The closest point of contact between Jewish tradition and English Protestantism, however, arose when religion and revolutionary ardour once again became mixed, and English

Puritans and Christian sectaries led a religious-cum-economic revolt against the established Government and Church, beheaded their King, and sought to establish a New Communion of Saints, an ideal Macarian Republic, that would usher in the New Messianic Age.

It was in a period and amid events much like these that the more fiery, eschatological Jewish Messianism was born, with its belief in a coming kingdom of God on earth, preceded by cataclysm and followed by the most glorious of social reconstructions.

It is hard today for us to reconcile the wild Messianic hopes and shrewd economic comments of a man like Samuel Hartlib (author of the Utopian romance on *Macaria*), or to see the hard-headed Lord Protector of England as a Messiah ben Joseph, come to proclaim the Second Coming. Indeed, in the day-to-day intrigues and administrative problems of governing the realm, and in the attempt to gain a broadly-based support, the Puritan government lost or ousted most of its more Messianic followers. Nevertheless, they remained prominently in the forefront of the intellectual turmoil of the day, numbering many of its most able men in their ranks, and presenting an active and vociferous formation in the body of thought of the day. It was they, above all, who gave to the age a strong interest in the Jews, a constant tendency among Republican Englishmen to look backwards to the dramatic predictions of the Apocalypse, and to identify themselves with the Chosen People, its past and its future.

To this vociferous 'left wing', the admission of Jews into England was a necessary prerequisite for the establishment of the earthly Communion of Saints, the Puritan counterpart of the Messianic Kingdom of God. Even among a wider public news of the conversion of Jews was awaited with bated breath. The Jews' odious and unrepentant exile was felt to be the last barrier to Messianic fulfilment, while a leading part was felt to be in store for the Jews once they did become converted. The seventeenth century papers and pamphlets collected in the Harleian Miscellany bear ample witness to the keen and by no means unsympathetic interest that left-wing Protestants took in the fate of the contemporary Jew.

As early as 1621, for instance, William Gouge, B.D., Preacher of God's Word in Blackfriars, London, published a 244-page work entitled *The Calling of the JEWES*. It predicted a world-wide empire for the Jews, and insisted that King James of England would then be able to join religious and temporal

glory by paying homage in Jerusalem. King James, with whom paying homage was a touchy subject, was not amused. His agents sought out the author, a widely-respected squire, Sir Henry Finch, and had him arrested for a period. The work was suppressed.

Then, some twenty years later, John Sadler, Town Clerk of London and author of the theological Utopian romance *Olbia*, announced that he had discovered an old prediction in the Zohar showing that the Messiah would come in the year 1648. The news spread, arousing wide interest.

It was proved wrong, of course, in Sadler's own lifetime—but the Messianic hopes did not die with it. In the literary field they flowered out only a few years later in one of the most charming, though most neglected, of Utopian romances, the story of *Nova Solyma, the Ideal City*, first published in 1648. For some two hundred years its authorship remained a mystery, and early in this century it was attributed to John Milton. We now know it to be the work of Samuel Gott, a Continental émigré who became an important member of that small coterie of Protestant social ethical and religious thinkers which included John Milton, John Sadler and John Dury (author of the Utopian *Commonwealth of Israel*) and which strongly influenced that able politician James Harrington author of the *Commonwealth of Oceana* with its suggestion for a Jewish National Home in Ireland.

Gott's *Nova Solyma* is the story of two young English students, Eugenius and Politian, who have heard of the fame of the new ideal republic established by the Christianized Jews, once more gathered together in their ancient land and their old capital Solyma (patently Jerusalem). Eugenius and Politian are led there by a young Jew, Joseph, to whose help they came in Italy. Joseph's father Jacob is one of the elders of the Republic and was one of the first Jews to accept Christianity through conviction, after reading the New Testament in the light of his people's ancient prophecies. But Jacob and all his people are proud and conscious Jews, seeing Christianity (as Gott himself did) as the logical fulfilment of their ancient traditions. Once converted, they have again assumed their place as the rightful elect of God, and through planned education (which Gott describes in laborious detail, since it is the main message of the work) they have succeeded in creating an ideal republic, that knows neither avarice nor pride, neither jealousy nor dissension. Jacob, recalling that his parents were not yet Christians, explains that this was partly because they saw the value of following

their own traditions (not realizing that Christianity fulfilled them) and partly because the shameful treatment afforded them by those who claimed to be propagating Christianity was hardly an advertisement for the creed.

Jacob's son Joseph, at his morning prayers, sings this song:

O sacred top of Solyma,
How lovely is the place
Where stands the city of our King,
Where faithful saints rejoice and sing
Of mercy, love and grace!

Here too dost Thou, our Light and Life,
Illumine each dark heart;
The veil is gone from Israel's face,
The true Light shines on Israel's race,
Lord, grant Thine ancient people grace,
To see Thee as Thou art.

For an exile long, to me at last
It is by God's grace given
To clasp my kindred by the hand,
Again on Zion's hill to stand,
And praise God in my Fatherland,
O antepast of Heaven!

Only less than a century after Marlowe's *Barabbas, Jew of Malta*, Joseph and Jacob indeed mark an extraordinary change in the climate of English opinion, Jacob, in fact, is remarkably similar to Lessing's *Nathan the Wise*, and a worthy successor to the first positive seventeenth century Jewish character, the merchant Joabin in Bacon's *New Atlantis*. But just as Joabin, 'a wise man and learned, and of great policy', could become a positive Jew only by acknowledging that Jesus was of virgin born, so the model Jews of *Nova Solyma* had to become Christians to gain true respect.

Against the grim picture of persecution in seventeenth-century Europe, however, and the popular feeling against (absent) Jews in Elizabethan England, the earnest Messianic hopes for the peaceful conversion of Jewry so prevalent in Puritan England stand out in their humanity and their relative tolerance. Without this remarkable change of attitude, even the unofficial admission of Jews into England may well have proved politically impossible.

Eugene Kamenka

ITALIANS IN QUEENSLAND

ASPECTS OF ASSIMILATION

John Hempel

OF THE one-and-a-third million persons who have arrived in Australia since the war with the intention of staying a year or more, Italian immigrants, who are the largest non-British group, number nearly two hundred thousand. In spite of this they remain one of the least understood groups, for such studies of Italian migrants which have been made are limited to relatively small areas of settlement and provide only fragmentary information. Furthermore, official data throws little light on the activities of migrants once they have left the initial employment and accommodation in which they were placed on arrival. Consequently Australian opinion of Italian immigrants tends to be influenced by traditional prejudice rather than scientific fact.

The first large wave of Italian migrants arrived in Australia in the early nineteen-twenties. Their pattern of settlement was closely related to the development of the sugar industry in the northern part of Queensland. But since in the nineteen-thirties the total number of Italian-born persons in Australia was only about twenty-seven thousand the pre-war migration was hardly comparable in magnitude with the post-war influx.

In the post-war period the main areas of Italian settlement in the north Queensland cane field areas have been gradually losing their original position of attracting the great majority of Italians migrants. Italians have spread throughout the State, mainly into the tobacco and fruit growing areas, but also into the mining areas in the west and areas in which there are such undertakings as irrigation projects. Nevertheless the traditional areas of settlement remain much the same as before and it seems that this is due, less than is usually thought, to the desire of Italians to join a national group and more to purely economic influences and in particular to the tendency of Italians to seek employment in a relatively limited range of occupations.

Census figures indicate that in 1954, and in contrast to other migrant national groups, only one-sixth of Italian-born persons domiciled in Queensland lived in Brisbane. This situation is just the opposite of what is occurring in the southern States;

for in NSW, Sydney contains two-thirds of the State's Italian-born persons, and in Victoria, with forty-one per cent of all Italian post-war migrants, almost three-quarters of Italian-born migrants have settled in Melbourne, mainly in the City, Brunswick and Fitzroy areas.

Although in absolute figures the number of Italian-born persons domiciled in Queensland at the present time has more than doubled since the war, the Census of 1954 indicates that only fourteen per cent of persons of Italian birth live in Queensland, and according to a more recent investigation this proportion has decreased further to ten per cent for males and seven per cent for females. The majority of post-war Italian immigrants have settled in Victoria and to a slightly less degree in NSW, where they have been absorbed in expanding manufacturing industries.

The meagre absorption of Italian-born workers in Queensland's manufacturing industries is due to the fact that Queensland, even in relation to the size of its population is less industrialized than Victoria, NSW and South Australia. Thus Queensland has remained, since the war, the only Australian state in which the predominantly pre-war pattern of rural settlement of Italians has been preserved.

Harvesting of sugar cane absorbs by far the largest proportion of Italian agricultural workers in Queensland and Italian migrants comprise the majority of cane-cutters. Cane-cutting was and still is the most typical initial form of employment of Italians. It is also a source of seasonal employment for many men of Italian origin, who live outside the North Queensland sugar cane areas including those in other States. Cane-cutting is hard work and suitable only for men who are physically fit and willing to persevere in overcoming the difficulties met within the job itself, and the number leaving the industry during the cutting season is great, particularly among inexperienced cane-cutters not accustomed to such physical effort.

The majority of migrant cutters leave the industry altogether after two or three seasons, particularly if they can secure permanent employment in manufacturing industries in Melbourne and Sydney. The result of the high turnover is that the industry needs to recruit new cane-cutters in Italy almost every year, who come as selected and assisted migrants.

The general pattern of interstate movement of Italians is as follows: When the cane cutting season ends, a proportion remain in North Queensland, being absorbed either by developmental or other public works, or by other types of employment

available, or they find shelter on farms owned by their compatriots. The remainder move south, either direct to places offering other types of seasonal employment (like fruit picking) or in search of any employment offering greater permanency. These latter would usually first stop in Brisbane looking for work, often in vain, then they move further south and roughly half of them register for employment in NSW, mainly in Sydney, the other half in Melbourne. It is estimated that a number of those who register in Sydney move further south to Victoria which, apart from offering relatively the best opportunities of more permanent employment, is becoming the terminal station in the Italian peregrination from Cairns, down to the deep south. In general, the exodus of migrants from Queensland should be attributed almost entirely to the difficulty in obtaining permanent employment in Queensland.

Among all the requirements necessary to assist newcomers to adjust themselves in the country of their adoption is one which is outstanding and which can never be emphasized strongly enough, namely suitable employment. A happy migrant, or a migrant who will have the least difficulty in adapting himself to the receiving country, is a migrant who has been placed in employment suitable to the level of his education and skill. Most Italian migrants are young unskilled labourers and, as long as they are absorbed in industries, public works or agriculture, they are happy, but in times of relative unemployment they augment the pool of the unemployed and are often the first to suffer from it.

It is quite clear that the current system of cane harvesting would not be maintained in Queensland without the Italian cane-cutters. Figures indicate that cane-cutting in North Queensland is not an occupation suitable to migrants other than of Southern European origin. Most of the cane-cutters are selected in Italy in small villages and are predominantly of rural background. This system of selection was adopted on the request of cane-growers who insisted that the young men be of prime physical condition. The occupational adjustment necessary for men in the off season was not taken into consideration and men used to work in manufacturing industries were seldom selected. As the majority of assisted cane-cutters return to the northern cane fields only in the first few years after their arrival in Australia, it seems to be advisable to select men with better qualifications for adjustment in alternative occupations. Such a policy might in prosperous years affect adversely the availability of cane-cutters, but it should be remembered that it is

the prosperous year in Australia which calls for a substantial increase in the numbers of migrants from Europe.

Italian migrants in Queensland are, up to the present, engaged mainly in types of farming which demand a great deal of manual labour. They are successful in displacing farmers of non-Italian origin because they are prepared to work very hard, are enterprising and are prepared to wait a long time for adequate returns. They have succeeded in developing the production of such commodities as sugar, tobacco, fruit, to a level which would probably not have been reached otherwise, as the majority of all tobacco growers and one-third of all fruit and sugar-cane growers in Queensland are of Italian descent. Italians are relatively inexpensive migrants because their immediate absorption into employment in farming requires comparatively little capital investment. They desire to be left alone to make money and attend to their family affairs, yet those who remain in Queensland do well and contribute not less and probably more to the prosperity of the State than any other migrant group.

The capacity for saving is exceptionally high among Italian migrants. Not only the passion to earn but the passion to save marks them off from most other emigrant peoples. Why does the Italian save money? Statistics show that it is to make himself independent as soon as possible. If he sees his future in farming he will purchase a fruit or small crop farm in the south, or a tobacco farm in the north. Tradesmen try to purchase workshops where they can establish themselves as self-employed artisans others are eager to buy garages, shops, barber shops, cafes although in commerce, and cafes, it seems that Italians are no match for Greeks. The majority of Italian families live on their own land three years after the arrival of the breadwinner in Australia. This thrift of Italian migrants does not mean that they do not improve their standard of living for they become important customers of motor vehicles, radiograms, washing machines and furniture. The difference between an average Italian migrant and his British or North European counterpart is that he purchases consumer goods only after he has saved enough money necessary to purchase them.

Italian immigration to Australia and to Queensland has always been an immigration of young men, women being in the minority. In the three years between 1955 and 1957, men arriving from Italy to Australia outnumbered women by more than two to one. There are considerable differences in the rate of masculinity for migrants from the different regions in

Italy. This in turn is conditioned by the age of migrants and whether they arrive as selected types of workers—in the case of Queensland, cane-cutters—and also by the period of arrival of the majority from each regional group. The younger or newer the group, the higher is the rate of masculinity, whereas regional groups which were strongly represented in the immigration of the first quarter of the century, such as the Piedmontesi and Lombardians from the North and the Sicilians, show a considerably healthier distribution of the sexes. Migrants from the North-Eastern regions of Veneto-Fruili, for instance, who formed the majority of assisted cane-cutters in 1955-57 and who came in smaller numbers earlier in the century than the North-Western Italians or the Sicilians, show one of the highest rates of masculinity. The most striking example of this rule is shown by migrants from the province of Aquila in the region of Abruzzi with a rate of more than six men for each woman migrant. Since 1955 migrants from the province of Aquila have been selected as cane-cutters and there is hardly any evidence of them in Queensland before the War.

The older Italian immigration was par excellence a chain migration, starting with the breadwinner of the family, who after a few years either returned to Italy dissatisfied, or took with him his savings which often enabled him to buy in a higher economic level in his native village, but more often decided to settle permanently in Australia. He brought out his wife and children only after two or three years, during which time he had established himself and was able to decide whether he would bring them out instead of returning himself to Italy. If he was single he would often nominate his fiancée from Italy. The parents—or the parents-in-law—would follow if they depended for their livelihood on the migrant. Brothers and sisters were brought over some years later, and only if the migrant-nominator had achieved relative prosperity. He would send for them when he was convinced that they would make good in Australia and would eventually be in a position to repay the costs of emigration. Some years later again he might nominate more distant relatives, if he could benefit by it, particularly if he was in need of labour on his farm or in his business. The motives for bringing relations varied, but the desire for economic improvement of life was the basis of this chain migration. With the arrival of brothers and sisters, however, new chains commenced. In some cases, up to one hundred people from the same place in Italy (more often from Sicily) who arrived at various times carry the same name. They are

members of the same family clan. Chain migration tends to decline when active and pioneering migration ceases. This explains probably the relative scarcity of large family groups of the 'oldest' migrant groups from regions like Piedmont and Lombardy which are no longer sending large numbers overseas.

It was to a large degree just coincidental that the regional distribution of pre-war Italian migration in Queensland comprised people from Piedmont, Veneto or Sicily and not from Abruzzi or Campania. Had Mr Frere, who as Queensland Government agent brought out in 1891 the first Italian assisted cane-cutters to replace (partly) Kanakas, been not a Piedmontese himself, he might have recruited his men in another Italian region.

A certain territorial separation of Italians in Queensland according to whether they come from one or another part of Italy, which was more pronounced before the War, but which is still noticeable, was caused by two factors. Firstly, Italians arrived in Australia in waves of a distinctly regional character. Although such waves sometimes overlapped, as in the case of the early immigration of Piedmontese and Lombardians and Sicilians, as a rule a new regional group tended to settle in rural areas of Queensland which were separated from the already established group. It is only for economic reasons that the areas of settlement in Queensland were not farther apart, because the majority of Italian workers settled in the northern cane fields. The second factor which affects the pattern of assimilation of Italian migrants is the animosity of the North Italian migrant towards his Southern compatriot. As the Italians from Piedmont and Lombardy were the first to settle in North Queensland and as they were the first to achieve considerable prosperity, they were in a much better position to influence public opinion. It would be an interesting study to find out whether the widely spread reputation of a North Italian as a better settler and worker is not partly due to this feeling of superiority of the North Italian. A good illustration of this feeling is provided in the novel by Nino Culotta, *They're a Weird Mob*, which is otherwise a delightful distortion of the life of a Lombardian migrant in Sydney.

This strong sense of community still exists, but it is losing intensity and the distribution of Italians is becoming wider and tending to become more uniform in the sense that more and more Settentrionali, Meridionali and Siciliani settle in the same areas.

Today the most striking difference between Italian migrants from various parts of Italy is the use of numerous dialects.

It is significant that each regional group accepts the use of the English language without reverting from the dialect to the Italian literary language. The Italian immigrant is not an educated man or women, but to describe him as illiterate is a gross exaggeration. Undoubtedly, however, the low grade of education of Italian migrants makes language assimilation much harder, particularly because of the difference between the phonetics of local dialects and the structure of the English and Italian languages. The difficulties encountered by Italian migrants in their desire to adjust themselves to the existing pattern of Australian society should not be interpreted as being greater than the difficulties in adjustment encountered by other national groups, but different, and because of their nature rather conspicuous. Further, it must be remembered that the so called 'way of life' is not a stationary, but a highly dynamic concept. It is subject to both internal and external influences and is changing and remoulding all the time.

The full assimilation of adult migrants is almost impossible. With children it is different and the assimilation, both of those born in Australia and those born overseas, is rapid once they enter Australian schools. They become indistinguishable from their schoolmates, they converse in English by preference, and they retain the knowledge of the original dialect only as far as it is necessary to converse with their parents or with grandparents. Even then the language they speak is a curious mixture of the Italian dialect and the English language. This rapid assimilation of children might have bad effects from the Australian point of view, for the ability to speak and to write in English gives to the child a powerful instrument for adaptation which his parents lack. This in turn can promote in the children a contempt for their parents which could possibly culminate in disturbances in the normal family life, leading to an increase in delinquency in the second generation.

There is no doubt that the average Italian migrant belongs to what an Australian would term the under-privileged classes and so suffers from all the consequences which follow from this status. The contrast between his own economic condition and the high material civilization seen by the migrant not only in North Queensland but, what is more important, in the wealthy cities of Melbourne or Sydney (through which he usually passes), undoubtedly makes a significant impact, particularly because many migrants have no knowledge of big Italian cities. A primitive background combined frequently with the lack of acceptance by the Australian community tends to create among

Italian migrants a feeling of inferiority. Characteristics which prevent their full acceptability are their thriftiness and capacity to save money, often envied by Australian workmates, and their unwillingness to share in Australian recreation, including beer drinking after knocking off work. Although Italians are sociable people and do not like solitude, they are seldom encouraged by Australians to share their recreations.

Italians do not form national associations or clubs because they are nationally apolitical and have no premeditated tendency whatsoever to preserve their language and traditions as is the case with practically all other national groups. Their desire to get together in cities or in local country towns on market days is of a purely social and personal character and a substitute for the 'piazza' social life in Italian towns and villages.

Italian migrants very rarely intermarry with Australians of non-Italian blood. This is not only because of the reluctance of Australians, and particularly Australian girls, to marry Italians, but is an illustration of clannishness. Among couples who migrated after the war to Queensland, only about five per cent of marriages were concluded where husbands and wives were born in two distantly separated parts of Italy. If couples who come from large towns are eliminated, then practically all marriages have been concluded between partners from the same or neighbouring villages. The Southern Italian proverb *donne e buoi dei paesi tu oi*—which in plain English means 'your woman and your bullock from your own country'—applies really to all parts of Italy almost in the same degree.

Marriages contracted by post-war Italian female migrants with citizens of Australia of Italian descent are quite frequent. Naturalized or Australian-born men who have married Italian girls are seldom married by proxy but usually visit Italy in order to find a young wife, almost invariably in the place of their own or their parents' origin. Less frequent were intermarriages of post-war male migrants with Australian women of Italian descent. It is significant that the average time between the immigration and the marriage is in the vicinity of three years. As a rule fathers are not in favour of their daughters marrying Italian men who have arrived since the war. In arranging marriages for their daughters, Italian-Australian parents are eager to find husbands of equal social status and of equal prosperity. The migrant has to adapt himself first to the higher and material standard of his future wife and her family.

The attitude towards migrants in Australia, which paraphrasing Orwell could be summed up as 'all migrants are

equal, but some are more equal than others', is sometimes interpreted by Italians as meaning that they are less welcome than other immigrants and that they are a sort of *malum necessarium* brought to perform certain occupational functions which they can do more efficiently than the other more privileged national groups. Nevertheless, the proportion of Italians who return to Italy after migration to Australia is lower than for other national groups, and has averaged over the post-war years only one out of twelve immigrants. This ratio compares very favourably not only with South American countries but also with the United States of America. This is a proof of the successful adaptation of the majority of Italian migrants. The rate of repatriation is several times less among families with children than among single male migrants. There is no doubt that immigration of families safeguards the stability of settlement.

The rate of departures from Australia shows, however, a tendency to rise from year to year, and in 1957 the proportion of Italians returning was twenty per cent. Compared with the first few years after the war, when migrants were needed urgently to fill up the gap which had occurred in the working force through the drop in the birth-rate in the Depression, Australia cannot now offer migrants the same margin of economic prosperity. Nor is there now the same margin of greater political security compared with Western Europe. In order to attract migrants from countries which not only enjoy a high standard of living, but also from those (including Italy) which are gradually improving their economy, Australia will have to offer comparable employment opportunities and also inducements which will counterbalance the difficult operation of leaving the country of birth. It is to be expected that with the improvement of the West European economy and with the creation of the Common Market, the chance of attracting migrants from Europe will diminish.

John Hempel

TO A PATIENT IN A CATHOLIC HOSPITAL

R.A.Simpson

No visitor can reach the ward
Behind your eyes and tend that night,
That purgatory, with flowers, gifts
And one thin crucifix of white;
All sickness there is hinged to hope
And waits the sanctity of light.

For you this hospital is lost
And nuns who rattle pious trays
Become the music of your pain,
And this one day is many days
In memory. Here time attends.
You do not hear the nun who prays.

My words are neither bread nor blood
And die, unheard above your hill
Of white. You live my allegories
Of pain upon the world, of hell,
As trays of instruments arrive
Down passageways. Hands touch the ill,

Like hands that wake the dead, but fail,
Though scientific steel is wise
And measures all our lives; and I
Am left with miracles . . . with eyes
Opening in a subtle myth
That makes your life return and rise.

THE CREATIVE OBSTACLE

OBSERVATIONS ON CENSORSHIP AND FREEDOM

Denis de Rougemont

IN THE twentieth century freedom has become a problem. On the political plane, it has been put in question by dictatorships; on the philosophical plane by a new picture of the world, determined by science. On the other hand, at least in the West, freedom is seen as a thing with no fixed limits, either religious or ethical, political or social. Thus the European of today sees himself confronted by a theoretical denial of freewill corresponding to which comes the practical loss of freedom of one third of the human race, and at the same time he possesses a 'charter of freedom' to an extent never before known. The polarity of this state compels him to give new meaning to all that previously seemed self-evident: not only the concept of freedom in general, but also the concrete freedoms which he has experienced within his various fields of activity. It would take us too far to try to investigate them all. Let us therefore limit ourselves to a field close to hand—freedom of expression, and its role in Western literature.

Even a short historical survey reveals that between tyranny and literature there exists an almost inevitable relation such that the high-point of a tyranny coincides with a low-point of literary production. To list but three examples from more recent historical periods: the France of the Jacobin Terror, and the subsequent Napoleonic era; the Germany of Adolf Hitler; the Russia of Stalin. In all these periods there was a censorship with powers of life and death; in all these periods there was nothing left for literature but to keep silent or go into exile.

Unfortunately such a contrast does not work the other way round. It is, alas, not true that times of highest freedom bring to fruition the greatest in literature. The writers of the free world today have to a greater extent than ever before the right to say everything they wish to say. They use and abuse this right to their hearts' content. They can, without incurring any risks whatsoever, glorify theft and murder, rape and incest; they can speak for any political or psychological perversion, and attack with impunity all existing institutions. And they do really attack them: Church, State, Government, police, family and

property, public morals and national sovereignty. At the same time, the same writers complain about the Crisis in Literature, about the Decline of the Novel (which is the freest literary form), about the degradation of form, the devaluation of themes and so on.

It seems as if the maximum of freedom of expression, such as we have reached today, has as its counterpart a minimum of creative power, of sureness of form, of ideas, and inspiration. Literature and its themes seem with the increase of their free expression to become not stronger but weaker.

The conclusion is evident, that neither total tyranny nor a freedom of expression unhindered by any moral or legal obstacles has a favourable effect on literature. In actual fact, the high-points of literary flowering almost always coincide with times of the moderate pressure of an 'enlightened despotism'; that is to say, with a political, religious, moralistic and social censorship, *which however is weak enough to be circumvented.* Just let us remember the era of Louis XIV; the small German principalities of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (which were anything but democratic); the Puritanism of Victorian England. Each of these periods created its own style; and in each the role of paving the way to freedom fell to the writers, often in the political sphere and always in the ethical sphere. Freedom in those days was not yet a complicated problem. One knew what its meaning was; one knew what it meant to struggle against the tangible fetters of taboos and dogmas. In those times literature had the function of liberating as well as of setting an example.

But this it has really always had. Actually, all great European literary works of earlier centuries have originated from the endeavour to delude religious censorship. The linguistic and symbolic means that were used to this end can be traced back to the times of the Troubadours and the Arabian poets of Spain. Rabelais, under the pressure of Catholic and Calvinistic censorship, wrote his *Gargantua* as a political-religious pamphlet, entrenched himself behind a façade of coarse jests and daring puns, in order—and this he took even as far as translation into Greek and Hebrew—to portray and pillory the influential figures of his time by means of code names. Swift caricatured, in anticipation of the concept of 'science fiction', conditions in England in his day. Voltaire in his hundreds of short anonymous and pseudo-anonymous writings—they are among his best works—provides us with a complete practical guide to the art of saying everything without delivering oneself to the censorship and to prison. Dante too belongs to this series; also

Pascal with his *Provincial Letters*, and Montesquieu with his *Persian Letters*. The series can be continued to recent times, to Boris Pasternak and his *Doctor Zhivago*.

It would be an attractive project to write an essay about the creative role of censorship.

In all this I naturally do not mean to plead for the reinstatement of censorship or for an 'enlightened despotism'—if only because the enormous technical resources which are today at the disposal of the State would not permit of moderation in practice; and as soon as even the smallest particle of the freedom already gained is surrendered, one is on the straight road to dictatorship. I only meant to establish that the literary vivacity of an epoch is favoured by certain obstacles, provided these obstacles mean a challenge to courage, to invention, to the liberating play of forces. I have pointed out that modern Western literature, although it is not subject to any limitations whatever in the freedom of speech and expression, is not stimulated to greater achievements by this unrestraint, but is asking itself whether it has anything left to say at all and whether it can say it with the traditional means of expression. This problem stands out clearest amongst the French avantgarde.

From what is said above I draw the conclusion that creative literature must be defined in its essence as a liberating factor and not as a *usufructuary of already existing freedom*. The legitimation of its freedom does not consist in a permission, granted from outside, to say anything, but in the fact that literature dictates to itself its own freedom; that it makes the decision in a particular moment to express particular things; and that by virtue of this decision it imparts to the reader this very courage to which it owes its birth—so including the reader to a certain extent in the act of creation.

For the free European writer of the twentieth century it is no longer a question of overthrowing obstacles to literature, but rather of creating them for himself. It is a question of which opponents the writer in our politically free society selects for combat. A battle against traditional drawbacks, against the social and moralistic prejudices which still exist in many circles, can now only produce conventional, routinized works which can hardly be described as 'creative'.

The 'creative obstacles', if one may so express it, which challenge and stimulate the writer of today are of a different kind.

The most prominent of these new obstacles is economic in kind. We writers of today know full well that we can *say*

everything we want to say. But we cannot *sell* everything, as the publishers soon explain. Hence the advice they give us. If we are essayists they advise us to write novels. If we are novelists they advise us to write only such novels as will sell easily. And here, it seems to me, we have one of those obstacles which seem worth fighting. Here the freedom of the writer has to prove itself: in his courage to write as he wishes, to write according to his inward call and not according to the market or the intellectual fashion of the moment. In order to be really free the writer must follow his own truth.

In times which permit everything to the writer, the liberating act of literature can only consist in reinstating norms and scales of values, that is to say in creating order; not in being a parasite upon disorder and spreading wider the germs of catastrophe with gloomy pleasure, like the Existentialists and Neo-Realists of yesterday and before yesterday. In future the writer should show, with that kind of courage without which there is no literature, what the better goals for humanity are and how they can be reached, not how they can be destroyed.

Neither state nor society can create and guarantee the freedom of literature. This can only be done through the activity of the writers themselves, only through the uncompromising example which they give. Then the oppositions and obstacles without which no literature can endure will all present themselves, too. And so literature will find again the creative and fighting qualities which it possessed in its greatest periods.

Denis de Rougemont

PAUSE FOR PEACOCK

Mary Finnin

This is my peacock hour—
The summer unending
Burns to desolation
And is itself consumed.

'Be a king, George!' his mother bade.
(of surety only a king could,
Lavish, lose a country for a tea chest.)

Then, in a mad,
Mad, madness of peacocks
George took refuge from his life.
Took refuge from his sixty burned-out summers,
From his bibulous, randy sons,
His great-hipped, love-wracked daughters,
The political smalls
Wrung out in the antechambers.
He took refuge from his life
In a madness of peacocks.
The clashing cymbals of their cries
Haunted the woods of Windsor,
Turquoise and lapis of the sun-drenched terraces,
And copper-feathered eyes.

The royal birds so haunted George's dreams,
Claw-forked to strawberry mash his brain,
So that with every sentence he cried, 'Peacock!'
Reading the King's Speech to his ministers.
(Whig or Tory, this was madness dynamic.)
Gently they told him, 'No subject should hear "peacock",
That so royal bird—but pause for peacock.'

So he rode in state to Westminster,
The mad, third George of Hanover;
His horses' manes were plaited,
Their gold-bossed harness pipe-clayed;
And like a German folktale
The King's Speech was garnished,
Each sentence, with a peacock inaudible.
And the Commons cheered the King,
And cheered the compromise.
While, in the woods of Windsor,
Clashing the cymbals of their cries,
Turquoise and lapis on the sun-drenched terraces,
A thousand copper-feathered eyes
Made madness royal.

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THE UNSHIELDED EYE

THE PARADOX OF SHAW NEILSON

Judith Wright

FOR THE poets of the nineteenth century, their Australianism was inescapable, a straitjacket. Not only did it mean that they had no poetic terms of reference—since the English terms so clearly no longer applied, as even in his youth Harpur very well saw, and since until they were invented (which is the same as to say, discovered) there were no Australian terms at all; as, indeed, there was no Australia. It meant also that a writer's very existence, as writer, was so questionable as to make him fair game for any critic, literate or illiterate, and to make his champions, if there were any, fair game too. In fact, to recognize an Australian as writer, a writer as Australian, was as risky a proceeding as the writing itself; which was why Kendall's reputation was gained as that of a minor Tennyson or Swinburne, and why he foundered under that necessity.

We who still feel the last of the wash of that current can be as surprised that any writer succeeded, at its height, in breasting it at all, as we should be grateful that some did, in fact, succeed.

But it was certainly that crippling pressure that forced the special note of Australian writing—the rhetoric, the self-consciousness, that marks us. Harpur began it, voicing his awareness of responsibility, of isolation, of dedication. Brennan himself had not outgrown that sense, though he widened it to include the whole of poetry and the whole of the emotional sphere. It came from opposition, from loneliness and defiance, and it led more often than not to personal tragedy—Harpur dying in poverty and disappointment, Kendall, Lawson and Brennan as we know. Self-consciousness was basically, in one way or another, the theme of each; and few of us are strong enough to stand a great deal of that.

But in the early part of the twentieth century, there did appear in Australia something quite new—the beginning of an audience, tolerant enough to listen while the poet tries to discover the words he has to say, detached enough to accept him without overmuch distaste or flattery. And when this first happened, a strange spring seemed to break out in Australian poetry, which had never had a youth. If ever there was a time

when poetry here has been not 'literature', not 'culture', but simply song, it came and went briefly in the work of two poets, McCrae and Neilson.

But even here a reservation at once appears. The achievement of Hugh McCrae, which looks at first as joyously simple and sensuous as that of the mediaeval Latin lyricists, becomes the less simple the further we look into it. We begin to feel it more and more as an artefact, involving a deliberate rejection of certain attitudes in favour of others—not, indeed, as the outcome of a prose, but of a stance taken up in full knowledge of what it implies and what it must leave out of reckoning. McCrae knows more of the world than he chooses to tell, and his cry of

This sweet forest wind
Is more to my mind
Than cities or men

is rather a rejection of one side of life, than an affirmation of life itself.

Perhaps this gives a hint as to why, in McCrae's verse, he himself is so inescapably present: why even the best of it leaves us feeling the faint overtone of insistence, of invention, of mere decoration.

The mark of a true lyric is the mark of eternity, depth or crystal depth that leads us down into 'Full fathom five thy father lies', or 'O Rose, thou art sick', or 'I lost the love of heaven above'. . . . And even in his lovely 'Colombine' McCrae never quite strikes that eternal tone. However beautifully fashioned, his verse is still fashioned; it never lifts us beyond ourselves as Shaw Neilson does in poems like 'The Orange Tree'.

For Neilson, the other poet of that brief golden age, has at his best the strange simplicity of poems like 'The Maid in the Moor' or 'It was a lover and his lass' or 'The Echoing Green'. The more we read of his poetry—even though at first, knowing that it was written in our own century, we may reject it as childish or naive—the more the particular note, the particular quality of its inner truth, ring clear and unmistakable.

Written in our own century, yes; but it would be a mistake to imagine that poetry of this kind is tied to time. A famous psychologist once pointed out that in any age only a very few minds can be called truly modern, the great bulk are half-a-century or more behind them, and a few minds are almost untouched by the happenings of their time, as the peasant's life is lived much as it ever was, near the industrial cities of Europe. Neilson's mind was of this timeless order; the words

'sophisticated' and 'unsophisticated' have no meaning if we set them near his poetry.

Yet the strange thing is that there has been a curious clash of opinion among critics about Neilson's poetry, and what it is and does. Douglas Stewart voices the more popular notion of Neilson as a natural rhymer, a kind of survival from the days when poetry was a matter of course among the uneducated (if such days ever really existed); that he sang 'as the birds sing', almost unconscious of his art. His gift, says Stewart, 'comes from the sky, a natural purity and simplicity of style, and all the poet has to do is to take down the words as they arrive' (*The Flesh and the Spirit*). And yet another critic, A.D.Hope, reviewing Neilson in a magazine, calls his poetry 'literary', 'studied', 'mannered', 'with rhythms of epicene delicacy'. Neilson, he says, 'employs self-conscious and artificial literary idiom . . . charming, feminine in its sensibility, exotically poetical'.

Surely two views could not be more opposed, and surely no clash of opinion could be odder. How can these two critics be talking about the same poetry? And yet anyone who had read Neilson thoroughly cannot help feeling that while both critics miss the point, yet both have hold of a part of the truth. How is it possible to reconcile them?

The fact is that Neilson essentially escapes from all summary attempts to catch and label him. One verse may do to show how maddeningly difficult it is to find him—the verse about the lizard in 'The Bard and the Lizard:'

As green as the light on a salad
He leans in the shade of a tree:
He has the good breath of a ballad,
The strength that is down in the sea.

The similes here spring straight from a perception as unclouded and un-self-conscious as a child's picture. They sound so odd that at first we think they make no more adult sense than such a picture might. But 'as green as the light on a salad' —that is caught exactly from the green glow of the lizard-scales. And the last two lines are pure Neilson, meaningless at first glance but luminous when looked at carefully. The ballad is old and simple and unchanging, it has the strength of primitivity, of simplicity and age—the scaled fish, the scaled lizard that persist in their old primeval shapes into an age of far more complex beings. The comparisons are true and meaningful; but they do not sound so. They sound, as Hope puts it, extraordinarily 'literary'—'mannered'—'poetical'. They sound invented, but they are the simple record of a perception.

This is the quality in Neilson that frustrates and confuses us, and takes his poetry beyond the region where the ordinary literary judgments apply. Such a vision, such similes, we feel, must be either a gift from heaven to a receptive soul, or a 'self-conscious and artificial literary idiom'. They are neither. They spring from a level on which the self-conscious writer cannot work, a level to which Cézanne sought patiently all his life to return, or to attain; the level of unsullied contact with the world, of a vision, not indeed childish (for Neilson was a man who knew very well the pains and penalties of adulthood) but unclouded by the demands of the ego.

I think this is Neilson's real secret—the unshieldedness of his inner eye. Lacking what almost all men require to drive them on—an idea of self and its importance, to which everything must be referred to test its value—he was free to accept his perceptions and use them without betraying their immediacy. The light fell on him unfiltered. From that fact, perhaps, comes his chief fault, his lack of self-criticism and his occasional banality, but from it also come those phrases and cadences which strike home with so odd a twist of the knife—those sudden words and lines that touch off a flare of light, by which we see again something we have not seen since childhood:

> *An evil time is done.*
> *Again, as someone lost in a quaint parable,*
> *Comes up the Sun.*

or, of the violet:

> *Shy one, I said, you can take me away in a breath,*
> *But I like not the coat that you come in, the colour of death.*

or

> *Dimly we taste the old,*
> *The pitiless meal of Death.*

If this is the central fact about Neilson, it is also the explanation of our curiously double-sided reaction to him—sometimes patronizing, sometimes over-praising, sometimes merely scornful, but always tacitly uneasy. Perhaps it is our sense of this nakedness to life in him, that makes us unhappy with him, though we hardly know why; he lacks something that we began to develop so early in our lives that now we cannot see how much of us it has taken over, how difficult it is for us to put aside. If Neilson is a man without a mask, without a self to be defended or to defend, then everything we say about his poetry becomes a half-truth, because it is not in our arena that his poetry operates.

We can hear what Neilson is saying; our difficulty is to understand it.

It is from this elusive difference between Neilson and ourselves that our difficulty springs. There is something about it of the difference between the child's outlook and the man's (children, too, can be disconcerting, showing up adult self-esteem). It is almost in self defence that we call his poetry sentimental and immature, and say that the love he sings of is that of an adolescent, who has yet to learn the real problems and fulfilments of human love. If, in comparison, we think of Hugh McCrae's far robuster and more precise love-songs:

Is it because
Only tonight she gave herself to me?
The new bud frightened to be glad,
The child's first vision of the insatiate sea—

or

Her heavy hair, as smoke blown down
Athwart the fields of plenteousness;
Her folded lips, her placid frown,
Her insolence of nakedness. . .

it is easy to mistake Neilson's gentle mistiness for impotent abstraction. We miss the deeper note of the body, in his poetry, and do not see that the real values of his love poetry go very much further than this. Neilson is always singing of love—it and the springs are his recurrent motifs—but the love he sings of is not of the same order as the love of which McCrae sings.

If we do not realize this, our hasty judgment betrays us into further mistakes. We may even go on to deny Neilson a mature attitude to his art, imagining that it springs from the same source as the art of children, which charms us, not by its solution of difficulties, but by its innocence in not knowing that the difficulties exist. We tend to dismiss his poetry, in important respects, as unworthy of study, precisely because of its naturalness, because we think 'all the poet has to do is to take down the words as they arrive'. Or, seeing that there is in fact both art and labour in his verse, we swing to the opposite error and call it epicene and mannered. The swing from one misjudgment to its opposite is due to our failing to understand that it is possible to be adult yet lack self-consciousness, to be an artist yet see as purely as a child.

Neilson's life-story, as we know it, seems to lend colour to our rather patronizing view of his work. The poverty-stricken selector's son, the clumsy labourer so short-sighted that he could not even read, riding his cart-horse to work on neighbours'

farms, wearing cobbled incongruous clothes, working willingly for a pittance and sharing it uncomplainingly with his family —the picture is as comically rustic as we can imagine. He grew old at his work like a plough-horse, and was only rescued by friends who found him a job little higher than that of an office-boy in the city; his ambitions might never have carried him further than the columns of the local newspaper, without Stephens to back him; and Stephens' judgments of his work, though he knew them to be sometimes unsound, he accepted with gentle humility. That is the obvious picture of Neilson the man; but like most other judgments of him, it leaves out something important, the core of Shaw Neilson—a man as dignified as he was shy, as self-assured as he was awkward; a man who could write with perfect conviction:

Good brothers of the song,
Be not too dismal; it is you and I
And a few others lift the world along.

It is a most Neilsonian paradox that, though he was almost an archetype of the down-trodden labourer, and though he has written indignant and pitiful poems about the human misery that results from greed and oppression—'The Long Weekend', 'The Poor can Feed the Birds', and others—he has never been claimed with any conviction by the writers of the 'class-struggle' as one of themselves. Perhaps they are as little at home with him as any; hatred is not in his gamut, and he was hopelessly undoctrinaire.

Yet it was not that Neilson lacked pride—of a certain kind. In spite of his courteous deference to Stephens, he often had a clearer perception than his mentor did of the worth of his verses: he very seldom allowed any falsity to creep in with Stephens' criticisms and amendments. Of 'Song for a Honeymoon', for instance, he says (James Devaney, *Shaw Neilson*, p. 140): 'He gave me many valuable hints, and in one or two stanzas put in lines of his own. Most of these I threw out. . . . We argued a good deal over these lines, and taking into account our lifelong friendship, I gave way in several instances. Honestly, however, I think that I would have put in a better line myself. . . .' 'One stanza of "Sheedy" was altered very considerably without me being consulted. Had I been consulted I could have done the alterations much better. Many years after this A.G. complained about this particular stanza. He did not like it. I pointed out that he had himself altered this without asking me.'

And not even Shelley had a higher notion of the poet's value to the world than Neilson did. Nor did he lack a clear vision

of the greed and spite and ignorance of the world; he was never a sentimentalist about his fellow-men, though he was occasionally so about their accidental qualities. But, setting poetry above politics, he seems never to have been betrayed into the erosive attitudes of hatred or bitterness, preferring—even too much preferring—the quietness in which his perceptions most easily flowered and his songs were made. Hovering in certain respects on the edge of what is called 'real life', he yet managed to keep his vision innocent and clarify it into poetry; and perhaps the fact that his point of view was always a little marginal, a little short-sighted, gives his perception of truth its curious angle, its revealing lights and blurring mists.

What was the light by which Neilson saw and the truth he sang of? It was the simplest and most elemental of truths, and the most rhymed over; it was the age-old poetic starting-point, the rite of spring—the recurrence of love and birth, and the dark background of death beyond them. That is such old stuff that to the ignorant eye it is better left alone, for nothing new can possibly be said about it.

How then, does Neilson so often manage to make it new?—new, in a few of his poems, as though the world had really come full circle, shed its winters and its disillusions and begun over again—as though love had become possible, not as a repetition of an old story, but as a revelation and a meaning?

Here we come on that paradox of Neilson's, that he writes always of love and the lover, yet without any of the fleshly immediacy of a writer like McCrae. Surely it is not possible to speak of love with any conviction if one has not been deeply and violently involved in love's human implications, burned by its flame and scarred by its withdrawal? Yet, as with the rest of life, Neilson seems always to have stood a little aside from the personal involvement of love—the immediate passion, the gladness and despair, are absent from his verse, as I said before. What gives him the right to speak of love is not experience, but vision.

For the love that Neilson celebrates, like the spring that is its physical correlate, is neither individual nor mortal. Both, to him, were in a sense symbolic rather than actual, yet they are such basic symbols that they can mean nothing deeper than themselves. Neilson's spring is not a season, a month, or even a part of time; it is:

faith's emblem, ancient as unchanging light,

it is a 'divine speech', set against 'the dark season' of death. Love is the frail word of creation itself—creation, which, seen

against the forces of inertia and self-destruction, seems impossible, yet has happened and happens forever. So love, spring, the return of the sun, were not ordinary foreseeable statistical occurrences in Neilson's poetic world; in each instance they were a new triumph, an infinitely strange assertion, never accepted without a sense of the fabulous:

Again, as someone lost in a quaint parable,
Comes up the Sun.

'Lost in a quaint parable'—that is perhaps as close as Neilson ever came to defining his vision of life. One could easily dismiss it as only a phrase—like other sound-intoxicated rhymers, Neilson does sometimes make phrases for themselves alone, troubling little about their sense. But, elastic and precise, the line snaps back into its place and cannot be dismissed. It embodies the whole strangeness of his poetry—the view it sometimes opens for us on ourselves and the world we live in, in a light like that the young girl saw falling on the Orange Tree.

Neilson's basic themes, in fact, are chosen not out of naivety but out of knowledge, and not from boyish immaturity but from a point, beyond our self-involved vision, which perhaps only a certain kind of acceptance and humility can attain. Neilson sees life, in his moments of truest insight, as forever new, forever strange, sprung from a meaning we know nothing of, and constantly renewed from sources beyond itself in a round of repetition. The Lizard—that ancient symbol of life-wisdom—tells the Bard, 'We live by the folly of spring'; and the news is joyful, not ironic. The parable of life is guaranteed, as to its final meaningfulness, by its very renewal.

That kind of acceptance is not unquestioning nor childish; it comes of an attitude much more difficult to attain. Neilson's symbolic spring and love are set against a dark background—a background that he knew well in his own life, of death, winter, poverty. Many of his poems are concerned with death. 'Deep is the dark; it drinks the day', he says, in 'The Lover Sings'; and he asks in 'To the Thick Darkness':

I have been questioning long: Is Death
But a poor journeyman for you?

Neilson was no easy optimist. For him, the destruction of life, the 'black season', was as real as its renewal.

But there is no question which is the more meaningful. The poet's task, for him, is to make part of that renewal—to be:

Chief messenger of light, to cheer
The brown earth and that bides thereon.

That is why the song must be 'delicate', tender as the spring itself:

Let your song be delicate.
Sing no loud hymn:
Death is abroad . . . oh, the black season!
The deep—the dim!

It is his insistence on the shadow-side of life, the imminence of death, that gives his poetry its real depth of meaning:

Old jester merciless with the dead,
That as a hastening child I knew,
In the impatient deeps ahead
How shall I make a friend of you?

he asks in 'To the Thick Darkness'. His affirmations are never wholly unclouded, his acceptances are made in full knowledge. In fact, read attentively, he is one of the most melancholy as well as the most joyful of our poets, because of his trembling awareness of the odds against which the creative spirit—that which is manifested in love, in spring and in poetry—makes itself known, and the nature of the forces that oppose it—of:

The Bat, the deep-fallen,
Who craves mankind:
Who puts out his evil on
The opening mind.

It is just this quality of frailness, of breathless tenderness, in youth and love, that his poems catch for us again and again.

The moon did seem as music spilled
upon her spotless gown,
And at her height of happiness
the summer tear came down.

Beauty for him is 'folly-fed'; winter and reason, 'the cold emperor', lie in wait for spring and love, 'the beloved lies'. And the very return of spring and love emphasize more sharply the cold and darkness of the world, against which the poet must gather all his forces:

Though Reason in the cold
Sits as an emperor,
Say loudly it is gold,
My thoughts are gossamer;
With loveless lips and dry
Say to that emperor
That summer shall not die.

For the poet, 'suckling of folly', reason is the negation of creativity, the bleak recognition of inevitable death, and for

reason (Neilson clearly saw) the creative impulse is incomprehensible and outside all logic. Accordingly, the reign of reason closes the gate against the irruption of that divine impulse, and is the end of 'all beauty folly-fed'. In his passionate unreasoning opposition to reason, Neilson is following a true intuition; he is more logical in his own way here than many of the poets who pay lip-service to that analytical goddess.

It is this subtle duality of vision—this refusal to turn away from either side of the picture, from darkness or from light—that gives his poetry its haunting depths. If we persist in thinking of Neilson as the child who never grew up, who never discovered what life was all about, we know very little of what he was really saying. He knew very well—well enough to reject it on better grounds than most of those who rebel against it—that world in which laws, abstractions, arguments are brought to reinforce the reign of greed and stupidity, and in which even God becomes vengeful and justice merciless. It was his world as a child, the world from which the 'gentle water-bird' rescued him when he gained from it the knowledge that 'God is not terrible nor thunder-blue'. He turned from it all his life with gentleness but with finality. He would return to Stony Town (which is a city in the heart as well as the city of Melbourne) only with his train of fantastic clowns and dancers.

But that Stony Town was real he understood only too clearly. All of us live there, at times or always, and Neilson was no exception. Poverty and the ugly nonconformism of his mother's religion first introduced him to it. His inner way led beyond it, but in his physical circumstances he spent his life there:

Oh, 'twas a poor country, in Autumn it was bare,
The only green was the cutting-grass and the sheep found little there
Oh, the thin wheat and the brown oats were never two foot high,
But down in the poor country no pauper was I.

. . . . .

My riches all went into dreams that never yet came home,
They touched upon the wild cherries and the slabs of honeycomb,
They were not of the desolate brood that men can sell or buy,
Down in that poor country no pauper was I.

Those dreams were never to leave him. In 'The Flight of the Weary' he offers them as solace to the crippled girl with whom he felt a compassionate kinship:

You cannot go out to the blossom:
You cannot contend in the play:
I call you the little white maiden,
The moon that is out all the day.

The lights in the leaves are of scarlet,
The colour that comes to redeem:
The winds are all painted with honey,
And we can escape in a dream.

But the dream into which he escaped was not of the common kind. It had nothing to do with the vulgar fantasy, the Hollywooden drug, through which the wounded ego seeks to reinforce itself with lies and falsities. It was in fact a new and different vision of the real world, of the world as a parable, a tale invented to show the blind and craving heart of man where truth really lies. It is a vision in which 'the leaves are as words in a fable', in which God 'shall be drowsy, and think out His thoughts like a beautiful tree', where

The silent shall speak, and the ears of
The deaf shall be shaken with sound:
There shall be a forest, and lovers
Shall make it the holiest ground. . . .

It is not a mere contradiction of reality, but a new vision of the real; the eyes that see are changed, so that they see a different kind of truth.

But the complexity of Neilson's vision is beyond our everyday capacity to grasp it. He speaks a simple language; he writes in simple quiet metres, he does nothing to attract our attention, and if we are unable to see beyond all this, he strikes us as imprecise, misty, even banal; not only in subject, but even—if we look at him carelessly—in metre and choice of words. And no poet is easier to dismiss, or less likely to reassert himself.

Perhaps it is especially his use of language that differentiates Neilson from poets specifically known as 'modern'. Stephens complained that he was not 'bold' enough, that he did not grip firmly enough his 'backbone of ideas'. 'Your sweet sounds must make sense we can perceive without struggling to grasp a cloud. More firmness! More speed!' But though it was true enough, Stephens' criticism lacked a certain insight. It is the mark of Neilson's best work that it does, in a sense, melt into air and leave with us only a haunting tune or rhythm; that it seldom, in the immediate context of life, 'makes sense'.

And emphasis, firmness, speed, were quite foreign to Neilson's nature—who when the shrillness of a visitor's voice disturbed him, was known to leave the room and return with his ears blocked with cottonwool. He shrank from loud sounds, dazzling lights—'the morning was too loud with light'; and he could never have come near using the shock-techniques of modern times, which are meant to penetrate the mists of custom that

blur our perception of words, and to show us the world as it appears from the angle of an individual's special view, never as it looks to common vision.

Modern poetry, in fact, in line with the Crocean conventions, is often wholly personal, the poetry of a single ego; and I have suggested that the lack of an ego is Neilson's very note. He does not look for the unusual phrase, the different word; when they come to him they come naturally, because they express what he truly was and saw. And because the vision was his natural habitat he often tries, as Stephens saw, to make a word convey too much, or expresses in a phrase something which might take another writer many words to elaborate:

> *Manna from the* Heaven-appointed *trees*
> *Bids us to banquet on divinities,*

for instance (incidentally, the whole image here would be quite meaningless for anyone who had not eaten the little white crumbs of sugary exudate from certain eucalyptus trees). Or there are lines like:

> *When schoolboys build great navies in the skies . . .*
>
> *Sunlight has strange conspiracies above . . .*
>
> *Earth is upon me tedious mild. . .*
>
> *I foot it on the mist—the heart*
> *Renounces liberty . . .*
>
> *Creeds the discoloured awed my opening mind . . .*
>
> *Too well they know the tremble*
> *Of the hollow year . . .*

and verses as elusive as:

> *How should a singer of the cold*
> *Seeing strange holiness in air*
> *In his blue famine seek to hold*
> *Vainly your paradise of hair?*

It is precisely the frailness, the evanescence of light and spring and love that he conveys, and his language is as subtle and unemphatic, and vague and wavering, as those changing lights. Again and again his favourite words blur the edges of his thought and feeling—'faint', 'dim', 'lavender', 'deep', 'tears', 'dreams', 'joy', 'air'. And the passive voice, the present participle, the falling rhythm, are all marks of his poetry.

Inglis Moore has remarked that there are few strong verbs to be found in it; and it is probably worth pointing out that

even where they do occur, they are not always used as such. Moore quotes, for instance, as one example of their use, the line:

The clouds come over, the lights demur,

from 'Ride Him Away'; but a second glance I think will make it clear that Neilson was using this, not as a verb, but as a *descriptive word*, almost as a piece of music—or as a slur in music. In fact, it almost seems that it has here become a hybrid word, something between 'dim' and 'blur', to describe the fading change of the sunset light:

The red goes into the lavender—

and as such, of course, it is almost robbed of its character as a verb at all.

There is another example of Neilson's use of words rather as music than as meaning, in his description of the bird in 'The Song and the Bird':

He telleth all his mad
Manoeuvring to the morn,

where the word 'manoeuvring' follows the line of the bird's lilt, and has no other connotation at all. (In its descriptiveness, the word recalls Hopkins' thrush—'he does so *rinse and wring* the heart . . .').

This muted timeless note, this use of words, if such a use is conceivable, rather as percepts than as concepts, are the expression of Neilson's very self—of the simplicity and unself-consciousness of a man who, however bitter his experience of life, was always able, as his brother Frank puts it, to 'live in a different world'. But in a certain sense this simplicity and other-worldliness form the most difficult barrier between us and Neilson. We cannot feel *with* his poems, for there is nothing in them of our own everyday joys and tortures of individual consciousness—the joys of possession, in love, or the tortures of frustration; the agonies of thought and decision, the responsibilities of our solitary selfhood. We miss, in these gentle and lovely songs, some muscularity and tension, some sense of undertaking a task, of personal failure or fulfilment, of immediacy to life, that is part of our conception of poetry today, and perhaps essential to our real participation in it. For us, perhaps, self-consciousness is a measure of capacity, and a necessary ingredient of poetry, if it is to make us lift our heads from the agonizing preoccupations of our own lives and recognize the poet as someone who shares those preoccupations of our struggle with selfhood.

But what has that struggle to do with poetry?—what effect

has it on the making of poetry? Perhaps this increase in self-consciousness and separateness from society is the most important thing that has happened to poetry in modern times. The old idea of 'inspiration' as something which overwhelmed the poet from outside himself—a holy breath from Olympus, a kind of possession—survives today, but it has changed. Like the rest of the 'divine influences' which once swayed man, inspiration has become something internal, not external, something in the nature of man and not the nature of the world. The poem is thought of, today, as emerging from a more or less unconscious combination of elements—images or ideas, feelings or thoughts—in answer to a specific need or problem in the poet himself; as though the finished poem was a crystallization of an internal process. On this theory, the poem emerges only at the cost of a lessened consciousness—a 'lowered threshold'—in the poet, which allows it to force its way into the foreground, overcoming his immediate preoccupations and imposing itself in their place as it takes shape.

If we are to take this idea seriously, it ought to follow that the stronger and more developed the poet's self-consciousness—his will and intellect—grows, the more condensed and forceful the poetic image must be, if it is to thrust its way into consciousness against this higher resistance. Certainly there is a kind of poetic pleasure which is specifically modern—Miltonic and post-Miltonic—in the counterpoint of metre and thought, struggling against each other rather as a stream struggles against a rocky bed.

This pleasure—a pleasure of opposing tensions, of muscular struggle—is something Neilson could never give. His self-consciousness, to continue our argument, is too tenuous to offer any resistance to the line of the poem; and correspondingly that line is sometimes slack, sometimes even weak, when it is no longer supported by Neilson's exquisite perception of external meanings. The highly conscious modern mind is often engaged in a struggle with the poem, with the emotion, with the language that must be used; it moves forward always against difficulties. In contrast, Neilson's language seems half-formed, a thing of softened edges, melting into air; its movement is all fluid, its rhythms sway subtly and gently on. It is as though nothing had to be overcome, except—and that in the best and most haunting of the poems—the difficulty of conveying a vision as delicate and cloudy as that of 'The Orange Tree' or 'School-girls Hastening'.

So Neilson can never satisfy the appetite of the sad modern self, which mourns over its separation from the world and over

the problems of selfhood to which it cannot—perhaps will never, on the level of selfhood—find a solution. His voice is as hard to hear as the sound of running water, against the voices of our inner argument, and his songs are almost as elemental as that sound. His world is a world, not of facts, but of meanings, in which the image is reality. Death is abroad in it, 'waiting with a watchful eye'; but love and spring and sunrise are the other persons in the parable that the world presents, and the lover and the poet are messengers of light as well as mourners of the passing. The song Neilson sings is founded on the oldest of tunes, the nursery-rhymes of our childhood made various and strange:

Almost I fear her low, low voice
As one may fear the moon,
As one may fear too faint a sound
In an old uncanny tune.

We think we are too grown-up to listen. But perhaps we have not yet grown far enough. The child's first task is to acquire an ego, a mask, a shield against the world; but the task of the mature man is different.

Judith Wright

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HELL REVISITED

David M.Selby

One thing which research students of the future are almost certain to notice about the official Australian War History is the uneven quality of the several volumes. They range from the very good to the (let us be charitable) mediocre. Dudley McCarthy's volume *South-West Pacific Area—First Year* seems certain of a place amongst the very good. McCarthy was a happy choice as author of this volume. As a writer he has no pretensions to outstanding literary polish but he writes clearly and concisely and when the occasion demands it he can paint a strikingly graphic picture. But a proper understanding of the campaign and an ability to describe it require special qualifications. These qualifications McCarthy has. Three essentials are knowledge of the country over which the campaign was waged, knowledge of the Army and the way it fought and a proper understanding of the problems of the fighting soldier on the one hand and of the senior staff officers on the other hand. As a Cadet Patrol Officer before the war, McCarthy learnt to know New Guinea and, as the dust jacket informs us, he walked over the Kokoda and Wau-Mubo tracks to refresh his memory while writing the book. From his service in the Middle East he learnt the trade of the fighting soldier. His rank, that of Major, helped him with the third requirement. It is a rank sufficiently junior to allow him to see the Other Ranks as sweating, suffering human beings, not as expendable pieces on the chessboard of war as they must necessarily appear to the most senior officers; at the same time it is sufficiently senior to give him a view of the requirements of overall strategy. He was further qualified by the variety of staff appointments which he held on his return from the Middle East.

Knowledge of the country has been placed first deliberately because it is probably no exaggeration to say that more turned on this in Papua and New Guinea during 1942 and early 1943 (the period covered by this volume) than on any other single factor. Paradoxically much of our trouble in 1942 was caused, first by overrating the difficulty of the terrain, then by underrating it. The first led to the complacent view that the Owen Stanleys were impassable and so we were utterly unprepared to meet the Japanese thrust from Kokoda. The falsity of this estimate of the terrain having been so painfully demonstrated, politicians in Canberra, MacArthur in Brisbane and Blamey at Port Moresby apparently under-estimated the difficulties involved and the last two were loud and insistent in their demand for spectacular results. Having reached Imita Ridge, the last natural barrier before Moresby, the Japs were at the end of their tether. The Australians had opposed them with desperate gallantry and courage almost every inch of the way through that appalling country from Kokoda, their supply lines, hopelessly attenuated, were now being mercilessly harassed by the RAAF and, most devastating blow of all, with victory in sight they were denied their promised reinforcements, now urgently needed, and ordered to retreat to Buna, fighting only a rearguard action in the Owen Stanleys. McCarthy explains how this change of policy was forced on the Jap high command. The original plan had been quickly to crush the American invasion at Guadalcanal, then to hurl troops into Milne Bay on the East and Buna on the North, so reducing Moresby in a two-pronged drive. Here is where the enemy miscalculated. The US Marines refused to be crushed, their ferocious resistance draining off more and more of the enemy forces until a vital change was imposed on their grand strategy. The attack on Milne

Bay was mounted with inadequate strength and failed. The force perched on the edge of the Owen Stanleys was left to save itself as best it could. On paper here was a chance to inflict a spectacular and crushing defeat on the invaders with the two AIF Brigades and the Militia Battalions now committed. But the Jap was a cunning and courageous enemy, using every feature of that terrible mountain country to aid his delaying tactics. Nor was it possible to employ against him the whole of the forces available in one smashing blow. Numbers counted little in that type of fighting; in fact, even had it been tactically desirable to have brought forward the two Brigades as a massive force, the supply problems involved would have been insuperable. The technique of supplying ground troops from the air was still in its infancy and at its best could never be entirely satisfactory where a large proportion of such supplies as survived the shock of impact was lost in the jungle or rugged mountain gorges. Nearly everything had to be carried on the backs of the troops themselves or on those of the native carriers. McCarthy knows the New Guinea natives too well to indulge in any maudlin 'Fuzzy Wuzzy Angel' nonsense but he does show how impossible it would have been to have carried on without the thousands of native carriers employed and he tells of the sufferings they endured through exhaustion, malnutrition, disease and the unaccustomed cold. The indirect effects were far-reaching, for village life suffered in several ways through over-recruitment.

Grim was the lot of the wounded. True to its magnificent tradition the Army Medical Corps performed wonders in the treatment and evacuation of casualties, in organization and in personal deeds of heroism and devotion but the fact remained that each man knew that should he be wounded there would be no proper care and treatment, no hospital comfort, only such improvisation as could be devised in those cold and barren mountains followed, if he were lucky, by the jarring agony of being carried down the track for days in a makeshift stretcher. To fall into Jap hands was to become a victim of the atrocities which sullied the name of the Japanese Army wherever it fought.

Eventually, after weeks of hardship and individual feats of incredible courage and endurance, Kokoda was recaptured and then began a new, no less terrible phase. The Japs had firmly entrenched themselves on a narrow strip of the Papuan coast stretching from Cape Endaiadere, through Buna, to Gona. Again, on paper, the elimination of these forces presented no great problem for the Australians were reinforced by an American Division and their supply problems were now greatly eased. But again terrain played its part for the cold of the mountains was replaced by stifling heat; the terrifying gorges by flat swamp where soldiers lived and fought and died in choking, obscene mud often waist deep. The enemy defended his strongpoints in this country with immense skill and fanatical courage, usually holding a gun position or a fox-hole until the last man had been blasted out. McCarthy's account of how these points were reduced, one by one, only after heavy loss and inspiring acts of bravery on the part of all ranks bears the vividness of a contemporary eye-witness's description.

The final phase dealt with is the successful defence of Wau after the enemy had advanced within smallarms range of the town's extraordinary hillside airstrip. The complete picture of the year's fighting is filled in with a description of the defeat of the enemy at Milne Bay, the American capture and consolidation of Guadalcanal and the naval actions in the adjacent waters; the epic story of the Australian forces in Timor. Two highly controversial matters are dealt with objectively as becomes an historian—the 'Brisbane Line' controversy and Blamey's treatment of Rowell, Allen and Potts but it is a pity

that the author should have allowed a slightly sneering note to creep in at times when writing of various Americans and US units.

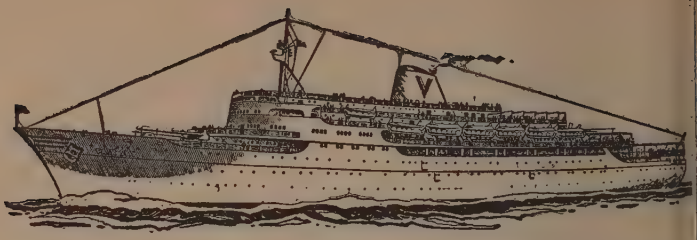
Two criticisms might be levelled at the book though there is an answer to each. The first is the introduction of a welter of footnotes with biographical details of hundreds of soldiers mentioned by name, often described by physical characteristics. It is hardly fair to lay the blame for this at McCarthy's doorstep since this has become a characteristic of Australian War Histories, presumably imposed by a dictated policy. But after all, it is written as history which implies that it is intended to be read by future generations and it is difficult to imagine that such readers will be interested or concerned to know the names and occupations of what, in effect, were the minor characters in the drama, much less that one had blue eyes or another was of short, stocky build. Such detail belongs to the Regimental History rather than to an official history of the nation.

Another criticism is that there is a tendency to describe local tactical situations with excessive minutiae so that the reader is inclined to lose the picture of the overall strategic position. In answer to this criticism it may fairly be said that the nature of the campaign was such that it frequently took the shape of intense, isolated actions at platoon strength or lower. McCarthy's account of all actions, both large scale and small, can be followed with the utmost ease by a wealth of excellent sketch maps.

Looked at as a whole, this is a volume of intense interest to Australians. It deals with a period when war came closer to our homes than ever before in our history. It is now known that invasion of Australia was not part of Japanese grand strategy. The defensive arc behind which they planned to develop their Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere passed to the North of this Continent but the people of Australia were deprived of this comforting knowledge in 1942 and got a bad fright. The present volume shows, to some extent, how, as a nation, they reacted. It highlights an inherent weakness of a democracy which must always, while it remains a democracy, be caught at a disadvantage when attacked by an aggressive authoritarian state but it shows, too, how human qualities can still play a decisive part in the subsequent struggle.

There is little evidence to show that we have learnt much from past mistakes. The dead of that campaign are buried and some already forgotten; once-familiar names which then echoed like a proud fanfare are fading from memory to be spoken only on Anzac Day reunions—Kokoda, Efogi, Buna, Sanananda. Should we go to war again some few lessons will be remembered; jungle troops will wear green slacks instead of khaki shorts; supplies dropped from the air will be better protected against breakage; handier weapons will perhaps be available to the troops, better drugs to the wounded. But there will still be ignorant and selfish politicians to whom votes are of more value than lives, generals who are jealous lest others steal more limelight than they are able to attract to themselves and, the Lord be thanked, thousands of young men who are prepared to die in some sort of vague belief that their dying will make the world a better place in which to live.

David M. Selby



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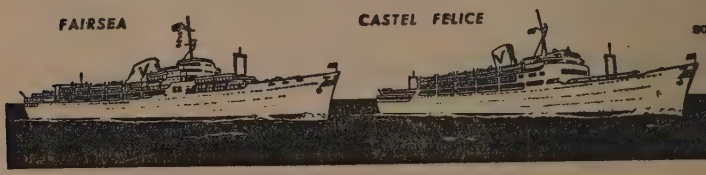

XAVIER HERBERT:
Seven Emus
Angus & Robertson. Sydney. 17s. 6d.

What has Xavier Herbert been doing since he published his justly-renowned novel of the Northern Territory, *Capricornia*, more than twenty years ago? On the dust jacket of his new novel he tells us something about this apparent hiatus in his career: '. . . I don't want it (*Seven Emus*) taken as the first work to follow *Capricornia*, which it is not by a long way. Most of my post-*Capricornia* years were spent in unceasing labour on the great work of my life so far, the novel variously called *Soldiers' Women*, or *Mars, the Moon, and Destiny*. I reached maturity in that work, artistically and otherwise. It still has to be printed.'

Why has it still to be printed? Is it so long that it daunts the publishers? Is it too shocking or too libellous? The publishers do nothing to clear up an unnecessary mystery when they announce, without a word of explanation, that they will soon be issuing Herbert's fourth novel, *The Little Widow*, as well as a book about his experiences in 'crashing' (as the blurb-writer puts it, with conscious or unconscious humour) into aviation in his fifties. Of his second novel, his 'great work', they say not a word.

Seven Emus itself is a short comedy about an attempt to steal a sacred painted rock from an aboriginal totem cave—the cave of the Seven Emus totem.

By the standards of competent, assembly-line fiction the writing is appallingly clumsy. Single sentences coil themselves, clause by clause, into fearsomely long paragraphs. At times these sentence-paragraphs are broken by dots, inserted either by Herbert or the publishers' editor, as if to allow the reader to collect his thoughts before plunging into the scrub again.

Yet *Seven Emus* demands, and deserves, judgment by other than assembly-line standards. It is a sample of Australian baroque, that rare species of fiction of which the first and greatest example is Furphy's *Such is Life*. I use 'baroque' in the architectural and musical sense of a work of involved, elaborate, even heavy construction. Ernest Newman has described one characteristic of baroque art as 'a kind of lust of technique, that shows itself in the elaboration, sometimes the over-elaboration of one favourite feature of the creator's art'.

This seems, to me, apt to this book. Herbert is famous as a talker and verbal story-teller. But when he comes to the printed page, mere tale-telling is not enough for him. He does not so much want to tell a story as to comment and reflect upon it. Some of the incidents in this story actually become asides to a stream of speculation; and the most memorable passages are not those which deal with the rather farcical incidents of the story itself, but which illuminate human nature in general.

As an instance of this, we can take Appleby Gaunt, the confidence man who is doing his best to ruin a cattle station run by a quarter-caste aboriginal named Bronco Jones. Like the thieving anthropologist (typically named 'Goborrow') he is more a playwright's character than a novelist's. But Herbert uses him as a peg on which to hang this remarkable observation: '. . . one can't help seeing him, in his beginnings, as a child of limited opportunity but of strong sense of superiority instilled into him by a mother possessed of the same strong sense, a mother only, because a father of that type would only be despised by a son for inability to win what he claimed as his right and his example would be rejected, whereas the mother could even blame the father, along with the

rest of the unappreciative world, for limiting her and her children, and to her children could transmit a very active idea of their superior inheritance without obvious betrayal of the truth that superiority is not a condition one presumes but an estate granted by others in acknowledgement of what they admire in one according to their lights.'

We might think how much better that speculation on the childhood of a fraud would be if it stopped at the word 'others'. The rest is purely cadential, an elaborate baroque trill. It is also slightly flat-footed, in a manner that Furphy, that other baroque novelist, usually managed to avoid.

Herbert's book has plenty of character and some mild excitement and amusement in its later pages. But the tale is too slight for his handling of it: the baroque style needs a matching complexity and variety of incident and character.

Roger Covell

BORIS PASTERNAK:
Safe Conduct and Four Short Stories and Selected Poems
Elek. London. 18s. 9d.

An Essay in Autobiography
Collins-Harvill. London. 26s. 0d.

Anyone reading Pasternak's collected prose works must be struck by his preoccupation with trains. In an artist so thoroughly committed to symbolism this is less than accidental although his trains thunder off from stations, grind unexpectedly to a halt, stand belching smoke in some forlorn night-lit goods yard or blaze in the rising sun with all the splendour of life. In some ways the train journey was the central symbolism of Dr Zhivago for the novel stretched like a huge, distended canvas on which was painted a bird's eye view of Holy Russia bursting into the flames of civil revolt, a charred and dreadful landscape through which wound the thin, steel tracks of the Trans-Siberian Railway binding past, present and future. Pasternak's trains are the means by which people not only travel from one place to another or from one climate to another but leave one state of mind for another. *Safe Conduct*, Pasternak's autobiography written in the late twenties, starts with a train journey. . . 'One hot summer morning in 1900 a fast train pulled out from Kursk station.' It is the first of many train journeys—trains which take him from Petersburg to Marburg, to Venice, to Florence, to Milan, from neo-Hegelianism to poetry, from Scriabin to Mayakovsky.

Neither Pasternak nor his translator apparently think it necessary to explain the title *Safe Conduct* and one must presume it to mean what it implies—a written statement or passport from one political climate to another. As a personal apologia of the pre-war bourgeois turned Marxist it must have disappointed, where it failed to enrage, the Stalinist machine men who were consolidating power in the twenties. They might conceivably forgive, one supposed, the autobiography's nostalgia, its erudition, its regard for standards, its scorn for the middle class Philistinism which they represented. But they could never forgive—indeed did not —its uncompromising way of saying this is how things were and are.

This is how Tolstoy appeared in my father's house, this is what it was like to walk through the forest and hear Scriabin compose at a piano in a neighbouring *dacha*, this is what we students were like, this is what we talked about and this is what we believed in, this is what a German University town was like and this is how I felt about Venice and Florence. And this, despite your crawling, loathsome, insufferable self conceits about art and socialist realism, is what I feel now when my friends are being betrayed and

debased by your notions of culture: 'His sister was the first to lament him of her own will and choice, as one laments the great and in response to her cries came tears insatiably vast, as to organ diapason. Nor could she be restrained. "They ought to be flogged!" she cried, in Mayakovsky's own voice, waxing indignant, strangely adapted to his sister's contralto. "All they wanted was for him to be funnier and funnier! They wanted to laugh. They goaded him. And see what has happened to him! . . ."' And the last, quiet, envenomed words of *Safe Conduct* are for Mayakovsky: 'From childhood he had been spoiled by the future, which had revealed itself to him rather early, and apparently without great difficulty.'

It is impossible to do justice to *Safe Conduct*. It is, for a start, either not well translated or else Pasternak was at that time annoyingly obscure by choice. It is a strange mixture of romanticism and discipline, by turns sad, moving, evocative and brusque. It is the autobiography of a man of great talent and courage who had even then, or perhaps one should say, by then come to the end of his tether in supporting the vulgar pretence that art can be standardized for the massed proletariat. In the Elek publication *Safe Conduct* is wisely published together with Pasternak's four famous short stories—*Zhenia's Childhood*, *Il Tratto di Apelle*, *Letters From Tula* and *Aerial Routes*. Of these by far the best is *Zhenia's Childhood* which must rank as a first class, sensitive study of childhood and early adolescence.

According to translator Alec Brown, the four stories are an attempt by Pasternak to mirror in prose the four movements of a classical symphony—theme, scherzo, adagio and rondo fugato. This is technically interesting but their value lies in their excellence as stories and the attitudes they reveal. At the time they were written, in the early twenties, it is apparent that Pasternak still believed that the Revolution had freed Russian artists from the constraints of the old regime—which to some extent it had—and that the Revolution still had something to offer which it hadn't. All four of them subtly plead the Marxist case in art and expression but even more subtly plead two points of view, two convictions which over the years have given Pasternak his massive integrity. The first point is that the pursuit of the theory of socialist realism in art can only vulgarize and prostitute those who attempt it. The second is an equally important conviction and was to become one of the major themes of Dr Zhivago—the necessity to maintain personal loyalties. At the time he wrote *Aerial Routes* in 1924 he still believed that the Revolution made healthy social demands on people and on their capacity for collective loyalty to the State. He managed, with great subtlety, to compose the two conflicting demands. By the time he came to write *Safe Conduct* he obviously no longer believed it was possible for the State's demands on loyalty were insatiable and nothing short of the negation of all human passions and values could satisfy it.

Safe Conduct, the four short stories —one of them, *Il Tratto di Apelle*, a surprisingly ribald, ironic comment on love reminiscent of Thomas Mann in *Felix Krull*—should be read and contrasted with his *An Essay in Autobiography*, written as an introduction to a proposed publication of a collection of his poems in 1954. It has been translated by Manya Harari with an excellent introduction by Edward Crankshaw. Pasternak intended that *An Essay in Autobiography* should replace *Safe Conduct* as a summary of his life, both because he saw things differently and more quietly after a quarter of a century and because the excesses of his youthful style now repel him.

'I dislike my style up to 1940, just

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as I quarrel with half of Mayakovsky's writings and with some of Ysenin's. I dislike the disintegrating forms, the impoverished thought and the littered and uneven language of those days.' *Safe Conduct*, says Pasternak 'was spoiled by its affected manner, the besetting sin of those days'. That is fair criticism and by contrast with *Safe Conduct* the *Essay* is strikingly polished. The tragic and moving events of the world's greatest paroxysm are recalled in tranquil sadness. Pasternak views the dead with discernment, the living with less rancour. All the sights, sounds and sensations of a long life are distilled and their essence recorded. Well, not quite all, for running through the book like a motif is the obsessive thought of Dr Zhivago. 'Here ends my biographical sketch. To take it further would be immeasurably difficult. If I went on with it, keeping to the sequence of events, I would have to speak of years and circumstances, of people and of destinies contained within the framework of the revolution. Of a world of aims and aspirations, problems and achievements previously unknown, and of a new restraint, a new severity and new trials which it imposed on human personality, pride, honour, industry and endurance.'

Peter Hastings

LIN YUTANG:
The Secret Name
Farrar, Strauss & Cudahy. New York. $3.95

Dr Lin Yutang, the distinguished Chinese historian, addresses his new chronicle of the Lenin-Stalin years in Russia directly to the 'penthouse Communists of New York'.

It is the New York dilettante, says Lin, who sustain doddering Communism throughout the entire Western Hemisphere. They are the only people in the world today who have missed the great historical fact of the last decade, namely, that the 'Worker's Paradise' presented in Karl Marx's psychopathic essays of the mid-nineteenth century, is now the cruelest, most extensive and most oppressive colonial empire in all human history.

Throughout Khrushchev's far-flung firing-squad empire, the worker has been frozen to his job, reduced to abject slavery; and the independent land-owning farmer has been obliterated from the face of the earth—all this in the name of 'the people's democracy'.

Despite the fact that twenty nations already have been slugged into the black pit of Kremlin colonialism, such men as Nehru of India, Soekarno of Indonesia, and Nasser of Egypt yet stand ready to deliver their peoples into a new cycle of 'peaceful co-existence', such as Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania and China began, some thirteen years ago.

But fortunately, says Lin Yutang, the immutable forces of history—hunger and unquenchable nationalism—now have caught up with Kremlin promises.

'Personally, I have come to the conclusion that the Russian empire—the present Soviet regime—will be destroyed by the problems of its colonies first, and by its own domestic class struggle later. . . . Soviet Russia today has caught itself in an impossible dilemma with regard to its twenty colonies. . . . Hungary is merely a striking example. The storm is gathering, not slackening. . . . The dilemma is this: today Russian Communists can love Russia, but Polish Communists cannot love Poland first without being labelled "traitors".

'The fact is that Russia is getting found out. Very gradually, its true character, behind its ideological façade, is being perceived. The judgments of the common people go upon deeds, not words . . . it is in the nature of things that a sham or a lie gets found out if the people are given enough time. . . . The

disintegration of the Russian empire began in 1953. . . . That is why, for Russia, the status of the East European countries must unconditionally remain a closed topic at any summit conference . . . the lowering standards of living in Russia's occupied territories is insoluble. . . . It is a strange and sad sight to see the governments of the Free World afraid to make an issue of the freedom of the satellite countries.'

Workers and peasants together make up seventy-five per cent of Russia's population, but they share only sixty-two per cent of the national income. The next thirty-five per cent of income goes to government bureaucrats and military personnel, who together make up only fifteen per cent of the population—the new ruling class. Slave labour accounts for ten per cent of the population, and gets about three per cent of the national income.

Thirty million people at the top of the bureaucracy enjoy more than one-third of the gross national product, while the other one hundred and seventy million workers, peasants and slaves at the bottom of the socialist pyramid share the remaining two-thirds. These are the facts Leon Trotsky was aiming at Stalinism twenty-five years ago in his classic *The Revolution Betrayed.*

Such are the forces which foretell the utter collapse of Communist colonialism from within, says Lin Yutang. 'This totalitarian regime has resulted in a number of contradictions, in misery, despair and resentment among the masses, and confusion and degeneracy among the ruling privileged class.'

Happily for freedom, all these explosive class pressures within Russia today tend to stabilize the peace of the world. The Kremlin dare not commit its military forces away from home, lest the sullen, resentful workers and peasants tear the new two-gun ruling class to pieces in a revolt which would make 1917 look like a Sunday school picnic.

Lawrence Sullivan

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And find them oddly moving after all.

J.McA.

RANDOLPH STOW:
To the Islands
Macdonald & Co. London. 17s. 0d.

CHRISTOPHER KOCH:
The Boys in the Island
Hamish Hamilton. London. 15s. 0d.

These are both ambitious novels which don't quite come off. Mr Stow's is the story of Heriot, a worker on a mission station in North-western Australia, who, believing himself a murderer after an altercation with a native, sets out on a journey to the islands of the dead of which he has heard the aborigines speak. On the journey he grows towards understanding of the natives whom he has in the past lashed, and indeed towards self-identification with all created nature, in a vast effort of sympathy and love.

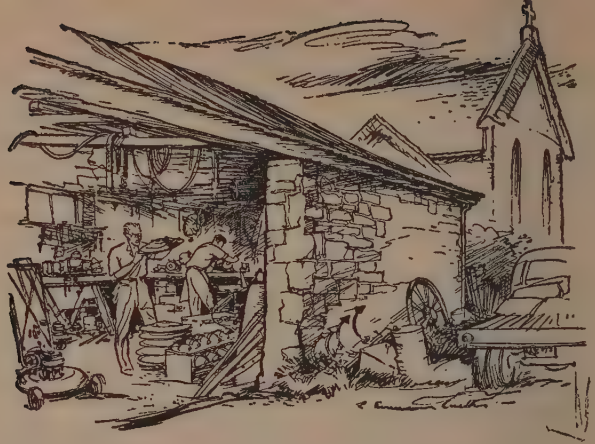
The whole novel stands or falls by this figure of Heriot, which is supposed to be charged with reverberating significance: he is Lear; he is Don Quixote; he is, at last, Everyman. If Heriot is not all of us, he is nothing, merely a crazy mission manager. Some critics have granted Mr Stow his effect of universality: I would not, because to me Heriot's significance is merely heavily insisted on, not achieved, especially in the passages where he expresses his communion with nature; these are forced and embarrassing.

The novel's pervading solemnity is neither convincing nor moving. As Heriot makes his way across country on his semi-allegorical pilgrimage, fragments of literature come into his mind: not only Jacobean drama, which is never very far from Mr Stow's consciousness, but Italian, French, Spanish, German, Latin and Greek; the method is like that of the obscurer sections of *The Waste Land*, and the effect, I'm afraid, is merely to make one realize that although Mr Stow is a young man he has read a lot of books.

Again, though Mr Stow says in his Author's Note that his book 'is not, by intention, a *realistic* novel', it features an uneasy commerce of realism and myth. The other characters, ordinary Australians, are really lifelike, and the parts which deal with them are not only better done than the 'poetic' parts, but provide us with relief from their strained intensity. The old Digger, for instance, whom Heriot encounters in a ghost town, deflates him neatly although unconsciously: '*O imitatores*,' Heriot said scornfully, '*servum pecus*.' 'Voo parlay fronsay,' Sam said, 'Ooay l'estaminay silver play.' Realism keeps intruding into Mr Stow's world of myth, not least because of his language. Normally he writes the clean, spare prose of a poet who knows how to use words, but in the context of his pretensions he can't get away with lines like those which open the book: '. . . Heriot woke and found the morning standing at his bed like a valet. . .'

The Boys in the Island, which tells of a boy growing up in Tasmania and then coming to Melbourne to a life of petty crime, doesn't aim as high as *To the Islands*, and yet it isn't a very satisfactory novel either. Mr Koch's forte is description, and there are passages, especially in the second half, which are shrewdly observed and vivid: the ride in from Essendon, the sordid St Kilda boardinghouse, the drunken party at the jockey's place. Each of these would have made a good short story, and it's my guess that this form would suit Mr Koch's talents better than the novel, as this one at least lacks believable characters and a plot with shape. One of the would-be racketeers says to the hero about the life of crime: 'I tell you I feel *mature* now.' The use of this word 'mature' (author's italics, not mine) points to an insensitivity to character which is general in the book—only the hero is realized, and he, I imagine, has a good deal of Mr Koch himself in him.

The plot is poorly organized. At



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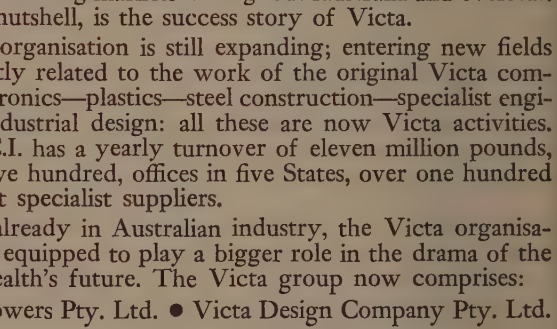

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the end, with no obvious climax in sight, an accident winds up the story rather arbitrarily. And the two halves don't fit together at all. The second part is complete in itself, and would be better without the first, which treats the hero's childhood and schooldays in a manner reminiscent alternately of James Joyce and Enid Blyton. The nursery-tale atmosphere of the beginning is merely irritating—Mr Koch could well use this manner as 'Uncle Christopher' on the Children's Hour, but it won't do in a novel.

Despite their obvious faults, these two novels are noteworthy because they show that their authors might do better yet—Mr Stow's novel is his third, Mr Koch's his first—and because at their best both men use the language with tact and control. Failures the novels pretty certainly are, but on a higher level than most Australian novels, especially those of previous generations. If these two poets can learn to meet the demands of the novel form, either might produce work of genuine distinction.

Grahame Johnston

ERNST HALPERIN:
The Triumphant Heretic
Heinemann. London. 37s. 3d.

Ernst Halperin's book attempts to combine an expert political analysis with journalistic interest. Despite the scientific pretensions, it is the journalistic aspect that prevails.

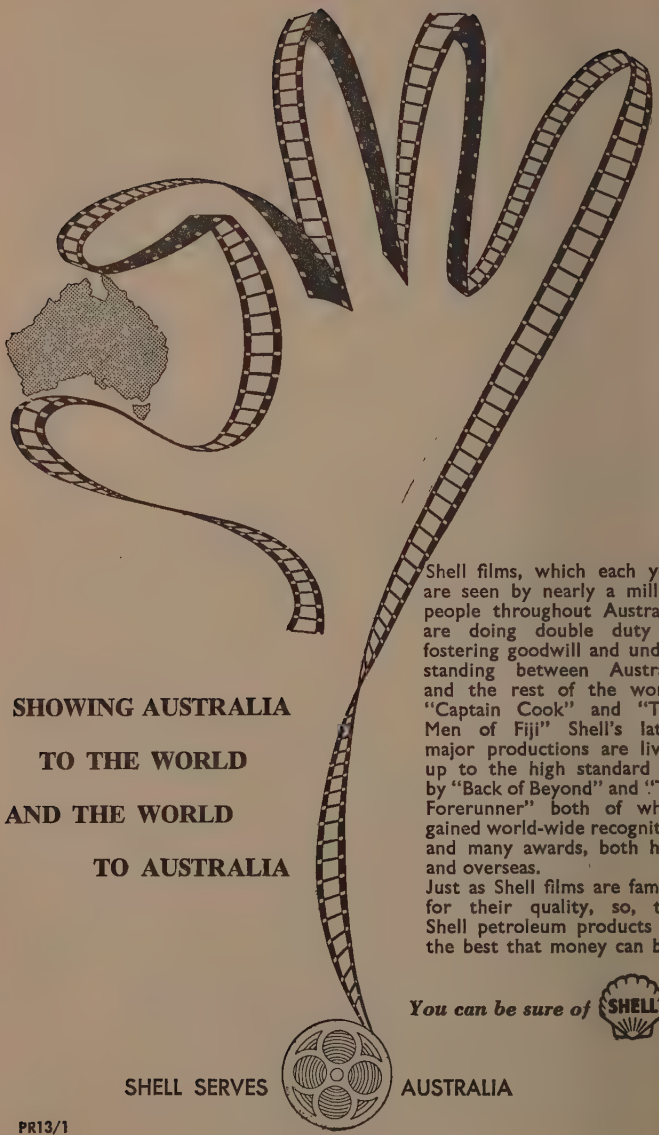
The author tries to present Titoism not merely as a contemporary version or heresy of Communism but also as a new ideology of the coming form of world Communism. He tries to give the impression that Tito's 'National Communism', though totalitarian in essence, has retained some basic democratic dimensions. According to him it is supported by 'an overwhelming majority of the Yugoslav people' and thus Tito's struggle becomes a kind of national self-determination which is at least close to Western democratic principles.

Tito is spotlighted as a 'politician of genius' and glorified as a 'triumphant heretic'; though at the same time his genius for 'masterminding a totalitarian party-machine' is really out of date, because 'at the present stage of history the people are making ready to smash totalitarian parties'.

In order to advance this interpretation the pre-war history of Yugoslavia is made a very black background against which Tito and his Partisans make a wonderful new start.

There is much that is faulty and confused in Halperin's version. To begin with, the attraction which Communism held for the Yugoslav people in general and the student youth in particular is grossly exaggerated. In fact the response of the students was quite low; ten per cent would probably be a fair estimate. In this connection Halperin contrasts the kind of student who in 1939 ignored world events to write a doctor's thesis on a theme from French sixteenth century literature and an imaginary Montenegrin student who played truant from college to study the *Short Course* of the history of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union. He asks: 'Who was it that correctly felt the pulse of history?'

The best answer might be given by a real Montenegrin student, Milovan Djilas, whom the writer describes on the next page as 'the supreme leader in the game, the teacher, inspirer and idol of the Communist students of Belgrade'. Djilas is now in Tito's gaol after having exposed the intellectual, moral and political bankruptcy of the regime. It happens that he is allowed to work in gaol on a philosophical analysis of a famous book *The Wreath of Mountains* by the nineteenth century Montenegrin philosopher Njegos, having felt only too well 'the pulse of history'.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The number of party members among peasants and industrial workers was extremely small. The official figure for 1941 gives a total of 10,500 Communist Party members in a population of fifteen million people. During the war the Partisans' ranks were swelled by Serbs reacting against Croatian Ustashi massacres. In the final stage of war after Teheran and Yalta there was a big influx due to the switch-over by opportunists and neutralists, and even some whole units of Ustashi.

During the book the writer gives a well-informed and impartial description of the highly complicated struggle between Partisans and Chetniks and the influence of the Great Powers as they affected that struggle. It is strange that the clarity of this treatment gives way in the end to an unexpected and arbitrary conclusion which ignores the facts in order to present the Yugoslav Communists as rising to power simply by their own strength and popular support. This gives no value to Allied abandonment of Mihailovic and support of Tito, and the decisive Red Army intervention lead by Marshal Tolbukin.

This is what makes the book so puzzling. The exactitude of some chapters and the rare skill of penetration into the political background of Soviet-Yugoslav relations disposes the reader to accept as equally valid the journalistic simplifications and distortions in the interest of building up Tito as a great man 'destined to play far more important roles. . . ' It is a book which is at the same time interesting, useful and delusive.

S. Radulovich

IGNAZIO SILONE:
The Secret of Luca
Jonathan Cape. London. 18s. 9d.

Silone's deepest concern has never been with the political as such: it is with the quality of life, with the mystery of personal being, with honour, justice, truth and love, not as abstractions and formulas but as particular needs of the spirit—needs which are largely traduced and frustrated by actual institutions.

In this book the politics of post-Fascist Italy are referred to only with irony. 'Politics, my dear Luca, is like cholera now,' Don Serafino explained. 'And a bacillus, once it begins to spread, is hard to keep track of.' One of the main characters is a humanitarian anti-Fascist of the Left who declares in every word and gesture his inward distance from the ordinary modes of politics—so much so that one does not quite believe in him as an important politician returning from Rome to his native village.

The story of the novel is the gradual penetration of the mystery surrounding a man who allowed himself to go to prison for forty years for a crime he did not commit. What unfolds is a tragic story of love and honour which the reviewer must not trespass upon. For Silone is a master storyteller, and the reader is carried forward in suspense and burning curiosity until all is revealed.

John Hughes

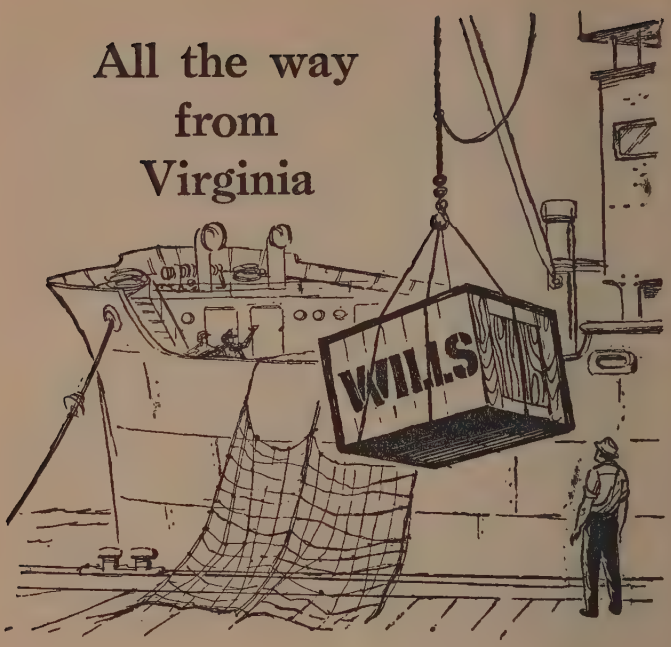
PATRICK WHITE:
The Aunt's Story
Eyre & Spottiswoode. London. 20s. 0d.

'This thing a spinster, she sometimes mused, considering her set mouth; this thing a spinster which, at best, becomes that institution an aunt.'

Theodora Goodman is physically a creature of yellow wood. Repeatedly the wooden images recur in presenting her, and the fine dust-jacket has caught the idea. But in mind and feeling she is otherwise. For instance, seated in church beside a St George window, sometimes 'Theodora's own soul opened and flamed with the light that burst through the Dragon's wounds'.

This irreconcilable contrast runs through her whole experience and

All the way from Virginia



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sends her mad in middle age. The hallucinatory father figure Holstius that she converses with at the end analyses her predicament: 'You cannot reconcile joy and sorrow, or flesh and marble, or illusion and reality, or life and death.'

The novel is built in three parts. In the first there is shown the Australian girlhood and womanhood of this honest, ungainly person whose fine sensibility is a torment to herself and a discomfort to others except a few—adult oddments and children.

In the second, freed in middle age by the death of a selfish, spiritually murderous mother (a character less well realized than the others though with some brilliant touches) she goes alone to Europe. Here her interaction with the guests in a hotel is seen from within her oncoming madness, 'so that there is sometimes little to choose between the reality of illusion and the illusion of reality', as Holstius says later.

Finally, as she is travelling home across America the madness takes possession. She gets off the train, destroys her identity, and is finally taken off to an institution under the name she has given herself, 'Miss Pilkington'.

Yet this is not so much a breakdown as a resolution, an extraordinary idyll in which she reaches a kind of acceptance and invulnerability. The wooden image returns once more as she becomes 'as simple and impervious as a scrubbed board'.

There are other symbols that need to be explored in a full apprehension of the book. Theodora's childhood home has a rose garden that enters deep into her sensibility: 'although this was an epoch of roselight'. Pearl, the servant-girl who is seduced, is to Theodora 'fine as a big white rose, and I am stick'. By the end of the book the only rose of passion and beauty is a black gauze rose on her large hat as she is driven off to the institution. It is a symbol corresponding to Nerval's:

Ma seule étoile est morte, — et mon luth constellé
Porte le soleil noir de la Mélancolie.

An immense experience of nineteenth and twentieth century literature has gone into the conditioning of this novel; but the creation is White's own, not a derivative product. It is a highly wrought thing in a Manneristic style, but could be called precious only if one missed the living depth, the pity and terror and the beauty within the artifice. We have to get used to the fact that we have a very remarkable artist living amongst us.

James McAuley

DAVID ROWBOTHAM:
Inland
Angus & Robertson. Sydney. 16s. 0d.

GEOFFREY DUTTON:
Antipodes in Shoes
Edwards & Shaw. Sydney. 17s. 6d.

JAMES K. BAXTER:
In Fires of No Return
Oxford University Press. 20s. 9d.

C.W.WEBSTER:
Poems
The Juniper Press. Burradoo. 42s. 0d.

David Rowbotham, like Robert Frost, is well versed in country things and brings to his readers a strong sense of the reality of dust, leaves, air, light, chirp, whirr and whistle, heat scent and silence, gum-sap, creek-water, honey of the wild bee, and

That other country, met on a step that snaps
Dead twigs, wavers in a tilting mirror light.
The whirlwind lifts its smoky shaft of dust
To spin the sun in haze.

In spite of his insistence that:

No word shall tell the precise spring of the fish,
And the finest eye
Shall miss the exact fractions of joys that stir

he is no mean descriptive poet. And

no mere descriptive poet either as *Mullabinda* shows, where tree, shed and well are developed into symbols and metaphors of feeling.

All the same, Mr Rowbotham is more intent upon his subject than his medium. His verse is remarkable neither for rhythm nor euphony and his diction is sometimes second-hand. How could he permit himself to write:

The coolly-flowing fibre, that slaked
The first explorer's slag-like thirst

and think it pleasing or effective? Or to use so often such eminently pensionable modern poeticisms as 'legend' and 'dream' or use once more such long since played-out words like 'hasten'? These perhaps are faults that critics' eyes magnify; others will find that Mr Rowbotham's straightforwardness and honesty make his extremely well-constructed poems as likeable and almost as easily readable as Frost's.

Geoffrey Dutton's poems reveal an enviably fruitful fancy; casual actions, ordinary incidents, people, flowers, houses, pictures, sentiments, blossom remarkably beneath his inventive pen. He is frequently but not intemperately ambitious of profundities and is on the whole a 'witty' rather than a thoughtful or reflective writer just as he is, or seems to be, athletic rather than sensuous by temperament.

When it comes to using this admirable equipment for making poetry the result is far too often, though never completely, disappointing. Mr Dutton is a gentleman who writes with more ease than care. He is perhaps contemptuous of his readers' expectations, perhaps content with his natural gifts and his undeniable accomplishments—a neat phrase here and there, a praiseworthy attitude, a smooth line in this stanza, an image that charms, another that seems to charm, the magic casements.

Languor or lack of verve is a principal defect of these poems, painfully noticeable in the satires; pressure of feeling and thought never seems to fuse the poem's elements into a unity. Admittedly this is no grave defect in the longer looser poems like *Anstey's Highercombe*.

The versification is sometimes uncertain or worse. Mr Dutton evidently admires Marvell but who, with Marvell's octosyllabics before him could commit

Pleasantly practical, before our eyes,

or

And that religion may be dead for all
Turn every Sunday to a funeral

and either suppose Marvell sounds like that or think such 'variations' effective?

There are misprints on pages 17 and 52. The blurb is quite sensationally stupid.

If James Baxter were a very young man one would certainly predict a poet's future for him. Youth would get the blame for such pretentious nonsense as *Green Figs at Table*. His appropriation of the language, mannerisms, sentiments or attitudes of Yeats, MacNeice, Auden, Dylan Thomas, Robert Lowell and Tennyson would seem creditable or even necessary steps towards the discovery of himself and the forging of a personal or impersonal style.

Such a ghost from the 'thirties as:

. . . built
An ethos of the leisured life,

such Thomasese, cosmic religion and all, as:

I hear in frond and shell
The voice of the drowned sailor
Tossed on the blackbar, with a winy breath
Shout from the feast of Cana
How love has raked the embers of his death.
And hermit from a holy cell
I watch my brother
King shag dive
Down from the windy

and so forth, these would go unremarked while the happy reviewer praised the virtuosity, the confidence,

and the range, fertility and energy of this poet's imagination.

But since James Baxter is not a very young man there seems little hope for him; and less for his New Zealand contemporaries if he is indeed 'the most distinguished, perhaps the most influential' of that group.

The volume is a Poetry Book Society recommendation.

I was sorry to find that Mr Webster's poems, so agreeable to look at in the elegant Juniper Press edition, were not equally agreeable to read. Mr Webster has some of the instincts of a poet, notably a concern for form and lucidity, and some happy images, but he is plainly deficient in sensitivity.

Sometimes, for example, the metre canters over words the voice should dwell on:

Fringing the lakeside the wattle burns yellow

or the natural associations of words are disregarded:

The crimson stain of Empire spread,

is *not* from a satire on imperial conquest.

Too frequently, as in *The Dead Land*, it is hoped with violent words to create passionate poetry, as one shouts at foreigners to make them understand. Too frequently the moral is made unnecessarily explicit; readers of modern poetry have learnt to take hints.

D.C.Muecke

JOHN M. TODD (editor):
The Arts, Artists and Thinkers
Longmans. London. 43s. 6d.

Like all such collections, these papers from a symposium of Catholic artists and writers and philosophers are of uneven value. But there is at least one paper of outstanding interest, 'The Desolation of Aesthetics' by Vincent Turner S.J. Its thesis is that 'aesthetics' is a modern growth whose real structure remains that of post-Hegelian idealism, even when it is re-interpreted by thinkers of other

The Catholic Church and The Observer

To foster discussion about the policies of the Catholic Church in Australia was certainly not an object in the forefront of the minds of The Observer's promoters when they began publishing this widely-read, fortnightly current affairs review only eighteen months ago. Editorial design, however, cannot shape completely the views of contributors and so it was that The Observer soon found that it had become a forum for conflict within the Church. This will not now suffer undoing —The Observer suspects the reason being that everyone has appreciated this opportunity to discuss at an intellectual level subjects that are not usually discussed. As long as its articles about the Catholic Church continue to hold such general interest The Observer knows they partly explain why so many people are willing to pay 1/6 every fortnight to read it.

schools. It is not empirical: indeed, 'it is not a theory at all but a dogma of a special kind of metaphysics'. It is radically unsound because it generalizes about an abstraction called 'art' which does not exist. 'No wonder, then, that it is an abyss of boredom; a desolation and, in some moods, a nightmare.' Just as the metaphysical idealists have done monstrous damage in political thinking so they have helped to corrupt the minds of the artists and their public, to whom they play the role of medicine man.

L.T.C. ROLT:
Thomas Telford
Longmans. London. 31s. 6d.

The author continues his studies of the colossi of nineteenth century engineering which he began with the justly admired *Isambard Kingdom Brunel* (reviewed in *Quadrant* 8). Telford was the greatest of the bridgebuilders and roadmakers.

M.A. SCREECH:
The Rabelaisian Marriage
Edward Arnold. London. 39s.

Rabelais the gross crapul... monk of popular lege... in the nineteenth centur... the free-thinking cryptog... atheist as interpreted ... scholars. This image to... into the rubbish-bin, a... Rabelais is an Erasmia... deeply Christian, presen... religious philosophy in com... Screech examines his a... marriage in the light of the... of his time over the merits ... and matrimony. Rabelais a... an upholder of the good... marriage, denying any ... status to celibacy. Screech... enables us to see more o... Rabelais was driving at. Wh... even so, Rabelais can be revivi... a classic for readers other ... specialists and a few enthus... remains doubtful.

NEW CONTRIBUTORS

R. J. O'DEA — is Executive Officer of the Association of Professional Engineers, and Secretary of the Council of Professional Associations.

M. K. ABDULLAH — works in the Sydney Administrative Office of the CSIRO. She writes: 'In his early days here, my father was one of the many Indian hawkers who used to travel the out-back with horse and waggon. Later he bought a sheep property in the New England district of NSW where I and my brothers and sisters were born.'

JAMES JUPP — at present lecturer in Political Science at Melbourne University and Secretary of the North Carlton branch of the ALP, was previously an active member of the British Labour Party.

JOHN HEMPEL — a Polish-born Australian, who works in the State Migration Offi... in Queensland, was recently a visiting Research Fellow at the ANU. He has published a monograph on the subject of his article.

DENIS DE ROUGEMONT — is Director of the European Centre, in Geneva, and President of t... International Executive of the Congress for Cultural Freedom.

DAVID M. SELBY — who practises law, wrote that notable account of the fall of Rabaul and its aftermath, *Hell and High Fever* (Currawong).

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